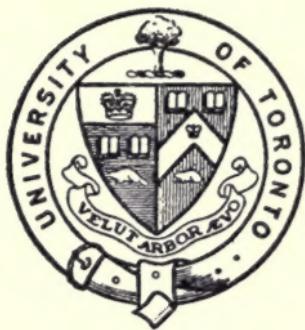


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AND OTHER STORIES OF CANADA

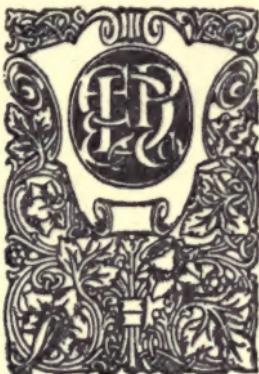
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A GREEN ENGLISHMAN AND OTHER STORIES OF CANADA

BY
S. MACNAUGHTAN

AUTHOR OF

"A LAME DOG'S DIARY," "THE FORTUNE OF CHRISTINA M'NAB"
"THE EXPENSIVE MISS DU CANE," ETC. ETC.



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TO

MY CANADIAN FRIENDS

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A GREEN ENGLISHMAN

A

A GREEN ENGLISHMAN

PEREGRINE, being the fool of the family, was sent to Canada to make his fortune. His brothers were put into those creditable and expensive professions which the Boynes had adorned for several generations. Their allowances were considerable, and on these they grumbled luxuriously, and intended so to grumble until the demise of various elderly relations of comfortable means should relieve them of the odious limitations of impecuniosity. Each of the Boynes felt aggrieved that they belonged to a family of five sons and two daughters. They frequently compared themselves with members of smaller families who were much better off, and they were quite unable to see any advantage in numerical superiority. Peregrine's eldest brother even went so far as to say that large families were a survival of the dark ages.

It was at Christmas-time that they used to feel their numbers most severely, for at Christmas-

time there was always a family gathering at the family mansion, known as "our place," and it was then that the brothers and sisters used to look sorrowfully at each other, and say in a tone of disgust, "What a lot of us there are!" Colonel Boyne's bachelor brother was always present on these occasions, and it was believed that he looked on grimly and with an inward feeling of self-congratulation at his nephews and nieces during his yearly visit to them. The girls were aware that they were not married when he came to see them, and the boys had a hideous and hitherto unsuspected notion that they were not self-supporting. Their father always failed them during their uncle's visit: when they were younger they had suspected him of alluding to them collectively as a "handful." When they grew older they were aware that his pride, which they believed he concealed from them with some difficulty, gave place even to such disloyal sentiments as, "I believe bachelors have the best of it after all."

"What am I to do with them, Tom?" he said.

"Plant 'em out, plant 'em out; they're too much at home," said his brother.

But it was from Simmons that the idea of Canada as a Tremendous Possibility came.

Simmons was valuable and stout and a butler; and when Simmons suggested that Canada was the country to which to go the journey was connected in his wonderful mind with taking a ticket and getting on board a boat, whereas all excursions on the part of the Boynes meant sitting at home and saying how much they would like to travel.

The house of Boyne was wisely and well ruled by Simmons. When he lapsed into tyranny Lady Agnita Boyne always alluded to him as a faithful servant, and hoped that thereby she preserved her dignity.

Simmons read *Tit-Bits*, and knew nearly everything. Without him everyone knew that the house of Boyne would inevitably fall. He had a feeling for trains which made him know, as by a sort of instinct, at what time they started and at what time they arrived. He could keep a whole list of silver-plate in his head, and he studied politics. He lived in the pantry and glorified it, and he drew on his coat at least twenty times a day when he was called forth from his lair to give assistance and supply advice, to find the hammer or stop the pedal of the

piano from squeaking, or even to say offhand the date of creation of a peerage and the proper precedence involved by it. He was paternal in his manner, and was known to have saved a bit.

Colonel Boyne sought him on a flimsy pretext of going through the wine-cellar during one of the dejected periods which followed on his brother's visit.

He discussed "sons" in the abstract while pretending to count the contents of a bin of port wine.

"Canada," said Simmons.

Simmons knew all about Canada ; he had a sister at Glen Mar, Alb., who was doing well. He said that fortunes were still to be made there, whatever might be alleged to the contrary, and he talked about real estate as if he had been born west of Winnipeg. Colonel Boyne began to buy every magazine that contained a Canadian article in it : he was enormously interested in all he read, and he said to himself, and subsequently to his wife, that he could trust the other boys to get on fairly well in the world, but Peregrine must be sent to Canada ; he had always been backward ; Canada was a chance for him.

“Peregrine,” said Lady Agnita, “is not such a fool as he looks.”

“He wouldn’t need to be,” said his father.

It came to the family of Boyne with a sense of inevitableness that Peregrine must go to Canada. His brothers said they envied him, and his sisters talked of coming out there some day. His fortune seemed made if only his father could maintain a determination to give him no money. All the magazine literature he had read, all the conversations he had had with men who knew had shown Colonel Boyne unfalteringly that no remittance man could have a chance in Canada. He meant to do his duty nobly and to withhold remittances. He even suggested a second-class passage on board the boat in order to make a man of Peregrine.

“Then,” said Peregrine, “I’ll take the difference in cash.” Peregrine had no conscientious objections to remittances.

“He ought to have a fur-lined coat—I know he ought,” said one of his sisters, whom the thought of parting was making tender-hearted. All she knew about Canada was that people wore fur-lined coats there. Her suggestion was adopted; every one began to be aware that

Peregrine ought to have a fur-lined coat, and the indulgence was acceded to the youth, with inward reservations about the dangers of coddling. It was really better that he should rough it—all the successful men in Canada had gone there without fur-lined coats—but the Boynes would feel happier about Peregrine if they knew he was warm.

Lady Agnita sighed a little when she thought of his departure. His father talked about the Empire, and believed that he was doing his duty by his country in sending his youngest son to fare forth into the wilds. The sisters felt a tribal sense of adventure in his exploit, and the elder brothers were inclined to say that Peregrine was the only one of them who was having a fair chance. “It would have been much better,” they said, “if the governor had sent us all out there instead of cursing us with a competence at home.”

But, when Simmons announced his intention of seeking his fortune in the West also, the consternation of the household amounted almost to tragedy. Lady Agnita, who had often preached the inadvisability of asking servants to stay on when they wished to leave, allowed a

feeling of disaster to overcome her dignity, and she frankly and without disguise begged the butler to remain. Colonel Boyne said, "Leave me to manage him," and he requested his faithful servant to come and speak to him in the library after breakfast. The younger members of the family in solemn conclave thought it could not have been worse even if Simmons had married. All their lives they had been afraid of this adventure on the part of the faithful one. They trembled when their mother had a good-looking maid. Now they urged even matrimony as a way out of the difficulty. Married, Simmons would undoubtedly "sleep out," but during the day he could get in and out of his coat as usual, he could look up trains, he could pack boxes, he could bring hunting kits to the proper station to meet hunting members of the family, he would still know the exact shade of temperature which would warrant Lady Agnita in having the thin carriage rug or the thick one. He would even remind his employers, as he sometimes did, on what days family birthdays fell, and would still have, as he always had, a spare fiver to lend any son of the house who was more than usually hard up.

Lady Agnita played matrimony as her last card.

"I don't 'old with matrimony, my Lady," said the butler.

She wished she had not met trouble half-way in this matter, and fell back weakly on the suggestion of a pension, which, however, should only be Simmons's if he were still in service with the Boynes at the time of his master's death.

Simmons was respectful, grateful, but firm, and his employers could only endeavour to conceal from him their deep conviction of the calamity which was to overtake them. Colonel Boyne began to make out with difficulty a list of his possessions, and found that he was quite unaware where anything was, or what he owned. Lady Agnita "went through" the silver, and became sentimental over long-forgotten marriage presents which she found in the strong-room, and returned interested and refreshed, but none the wiser, to the drawing-room. The young men of the family asked Simmons what clothes they possessed, and the ladies wished to know where he was in the habit of ordering this or that. The Prop and Stay was to be removed, and all prepared themselves with what courage they had to meet the impending calamity.

Peregrine and Simmons left on the same day, to sail by the same boat for Canada, and the stricken family of Boyne told themselves that they were feeling Peregrine's departure more deeply than they had anticipated.

Peregrine had a first-class ticket, and spent most of his time on board ship on the deck of the second-class with his father's butler. He had a great deal of luggage, many pairs of pyjamas and dress-clothes and silk socks. So large an outfit might have been inconvenient had not Simmons packed and unpacked for him and tidied his cabin every morning.

Simmons was extraordinarily good company. He knew the whole of the gossip of the ship before he had been two days on board of her. He was never troubled by sea-sickness, and this he ascribed to his moderation in eating and drinking. On the other hand, he was tenderness itself to those who suffered from the piteous malady, and even in their weakest moments he was able to find excuses for them in a way that saved their self-respect.

For instance, when Peregrine said to him, "Simmons, I am feeling uncommonly queer," Simmons was able to explain his condition,

which, he pointed out, was entirely due to the remarkable weather they were having.

“Sir,” he used to say, “it’s this stiff breeze *with* the underground swell that’s doing for you.” And even when the younger man said to him, with drooping jaw and pallid cheek, “Simmons, there’s nothing for it, I must go below,” Simmons, while guiding his serpentine path across the deck, said solemnly, “Do you know, sir, there’s even some of the crew turned up very queer this morning ?”

He was always consoling, and he became very nautical while at sea. A pilot’s jacket with brass buttons adorned his figure, and he wore a peaked nautical cap. The second-class stewardess gave him her photograph, and asked for his in return. He organised games, and was very popular on board the *Empress of Scotland*. Once, under pressure of persuasion, he recited “The Death of Montrose” in the saloon.

The custom-house officers alone were able to disturb his good-humour and the perfectly controlled temper which had adorned his character for forty-seven years. That any one should touch Simmons’ portmanteau or his master’s was deemed by him an outrage so unpardonable that

he could hardly speak of it in his usual high-bred accent.

“It’s democracy gone mad,” he said, “it’s socialism in one of its most aggravated forms forced upon us before we have even set foot on the American continent.”

For a long time he refused to give up his keys, and during the time his boxes were being searched he gave vent to remarks of so much bitterness and sarcasm that the custom-house officer, had he not been a French-Canadian from Quebec, with a limited knowledge of English, might have been quelled by the poignancy of the attack.

“If shirts must be touched,” he remarked, “I ’opes I am within my rights when I say they might be touched with clean ’ands.”

“Smell it,” he said, when the same custom-house officer looked doubtfully at Peregrine’s sponge-bag, “and if it’s tobacco put it in your pipe and smoke it.”

“That’s right,” he said with flaming sarcasm when the examination was concluded, “turn everything upside down and then leave it. What *ladies* must think of such treatment passes my comprehension.”

He spent his evening composing a letter to

The Times, and the language he put into it relieved his feelings considerably.

On quitting the ship he tipped every one handsomely—he always had much loose cash in his pockets. He had his health drunk in the second-class saloon, and he bought twenty-four picture postcards, with a photograph of the ship on each, and despatched them from Quebec. Quebec disappointed him. It was not equal to Dover, and never would be, and he thought too much fuss had been made about the St. Lawrence. He spent twenty minutes shouting for a porter at the quay, and decided then and there that Canada might be a country of the free, but it was certainly not a country for the free.

“It isn’t the place for a white man,” he said bitterly.

Still, he and Peregrine found themselves very fairly comfortable at the “Château Frontenac,” and they both talked a good deal about the Plains of Abraham, which until this moment they had suspected of being in Palestine, and they even tried to find the place where the great soldier had landed. But the driver of the carriage thought Wolfe was an English visitor, and said that if he was coming by train he would

probably arrive at the station on the other side of the river; and Peregrine tried to repeat, "They buried him darkly at dead of night," in order to impress Simmons, and stuck twice and gave it up, and Simmons was respectfully under the impression that it was Sir John Moore whom they buried darkly. They decided that Canada was a somewhat overrated place, and went home and to sleep peacefully.

Peregrine was going straight to a bank at Royal Ville in the Middle West, while Simmons was journeying on to Glen Mar, where his successful sister kept an hotel. At the bank Peregrine was to learn figures. After that he might do as he liked. But in order to find an opening it would be good for him to begin with a sound commercial training, and it was proposed that he should live comfortably on fifty pounds a year and extend his pity to that criminal class called the remittance man. He had his fur-lined coat with him, and ought to get on famously. Even his fare was to be paid as far as Royal Ville.

"I have taken a section, sir," said Simmons with an apologetic clearing of his throat, and his hand held delicately in front of his mouth to excuse the liberty he had taken. "There ain't

no second-class ; I have secured the upper berth for myself. I thought," he added mysteriously, " that it would be better."

" Why ? " said Peregrine.

" I have seen the train," said the well-bred servant, " and, offensive as it may seem to our English prejudices, sir, I gather that males and females all sleep in the same room, with no privacy or convenience at all, sir."

" It seems queer," said Peregrine.

" It is most undelicate," said the butler.

" A family in each corner of the room and one in the middle ! " said Peregrine.

" It's worse than that, sir," replied Simmons ; " you might have a lady sleeping over your head, sir."

" I shouldn't mind," said Peregrine.

When Simmons awoke in the train the next morning—" unrefreshed," as he expressed it—the atmosphere in the long corridor was a tangible thing with a quality and substance of its own. The steam-pipes were overheated, and behind heavy green curtains men and women lay in narrow bunks, like St. Lawrence on his grid, and roasted slowly. They seemed to like it. Peregrine rolled up an old newspaper to form a wad,

and, opening his window with difficulty, he slipped it underneath and provided himself with a little necessary ventilation.

“English,” said the black porter, who always knew them from any other folk because of their habit of carrying a railway rug in a strap, and shrieking for open windows.

Peregrine dressed in the morning with some degree of decency by standing barefooted in the passage with his green curtain across him; Simmons, overhead, seemed beset by difficulties. “I do not see how I am to manage,” he remarked.

“Pull them on as you lie down,” said Peregrine.

“Had I known I should not be able to sit up, I shouldn’t have taken them off, sir.”

“I suppose you cracked your head,” said Peregrine presently.

“I did not mean to say it aloud,” said the respectful servant.

“Were you able to sleep, Simmons?”

“I don’t believe I closed an eye, sir.”

“You snored a good bit.”

Simmons thought it was the young man in the next compartment.

"He stopped about four o'clock in the morning, and I hoped he was dead," said Peregrine.

In each division of the train were two spittoons, and with something of the joy of newly-wakened birds the company on board the train began to clear their throats thoroughly and from the very depths of their souls. Ladies in dressing-gowns began to appear from behind the green curtains, and with sponge-bags in their hands tripped down the corridor over extended bare feet. A waiter shouted "first call for breakfast," and our two friends went to partake of it in the pleasant aroma of the restaurant car, where many of the staff of the train had slept all night.

"Pretty 'niffy,'" said Peregrine.

"Boiled down democracy, I call it," said Simmons.

They declined grape-fruit for breakfast because they were not accustomed to it in England, and ate porridge, and guessed at the other things on the menu, and wondered what would appear when they ordered them.

"Individual domestic duck was the best joke on the menu last night," said Peregrine. "I wonder what clams are?"

“A sort of molasses,” said Simmons, “and very unwholesome.”

Two ladies came and sat opposite them in the restaurant car. One was dressed in brown and was very pretty, and the other was in blue and was plain.

“Everything seems extraordinarily dear to me,” said Brown Dress.

“The season is very short, of course,” said she in blue, “and living is very expensive in this country. One must expect to pay for things.”

“Brown Dress is paying,” said Peregrine to himself. He was a sapient lad.

“I think everything is very dear,” Brown Dress went on. (She had “J. D.” in silver on a little handbag, but it would have been a pity to give her a wrong name, so Brown Dress must do for the present.)

“They gave us paper bags for our hats for nothing,” said the elder lady in blue.

“They certainly did,” said the fair one, relenting a little. “But I dislike having to pay extra for a chair when obviously I must sit down on a railway journey. And I do not think that a cabin six foot by eight should be called a drawing-room car ; it is most misleading.”

Simmons was longing for Peregrine to relate some of their experiences of the night before, to which he might perhaps have been allowed to add a few respectful words to bear testimony to his own sufferings. On the other hand, he admired his master's English reticence, and reflected that you never knew whom you were meeting in a train.

The lady in brown bowed as she left the restaurant table, and the one in blue looked prim. They disappeared to their six-by-eight feet drawing-room, and Peregrine went and sat outside the observation car in order to get a little air, while the usual number of merry children, who are always to be found travelling in Canada, made a nursery of the inside, ate apples, and frolicked gaily over everyone's toes.

At lunch-time the two ladies did not appear, and Simmons ventured to suggest that they were waiting for the second or third call for lunch.

"It was beastly greedy of us to come at the first call," said Peregrine.

There were three calls for dinner, which was called supper on board the train, and it was very difficult to know which one to choose.

“I believe I could find out, sir,” said the ever-useful servant. “The coloured porter seemed a very intelligent man.”

“All right,” said Peregrine.

“The name of the one is Miss Lucas,” was the information that he gathered, “and the other is Miss Drew. They are going in to dinner at the second call.”

“All right,” said Peregrine again.

Simmons respectfully waited for the third call, and Peregrine made friends with his two fellow-voyagers on the historic subject of open windows.

“I know for a fact,” said Miss Lucas, “that half the people of this country die of consumption all owing to want of air.”

They grieved over the sadness of this, and Miss Lucas expressed a hope that there were plenty of sanatoriums in Canada.

The train continued to sway and rock as they journeyed on, and Peregrine proved himself useful at fielding articles that might otherwise have rolled from the table.

Miss Drew gave it as her opinion that Canada was full of romance, and Miss Lucas said that much must be forgiven it because it was a new country. Peregrine remarked that he had come

out to make money. By the end of dinner-time they had discovered that they were all devoted to golf, interested in fishing, and Conservatives from a sense of deep conviction. Such similarity of tastes and views constitutes an introduction. When the ladies left the table they shook hands and said good-bye, for Royal Ville would be reached at seven o'clock the following morning, and at Royal Ville Peregrine with his trunks and his railway rug and his suit-case would be left behind, while the butler and the two ladies were continuing the journey still farther.

He felt sorry to leave the train, and remembered several things that he would like to have said to Brown Dress the evening before, if he had thought of them. He blushed when she appeared in the corridor and said to him, "I believe I ran away with your pencil last night."

"She might easily have sent it by the porter," he thought ecstatically.

Simmons gave him his keys, and he stood on the platform and waved his hat to the young lady, who looked out of the window. Simmons also looked out, and, letting down the glass, he shouted in a voice that was distinctly audible

all over the station, "Good-bye, Master Peregrine."

The name stuck to Peregrine during the whole time he was in Canada.

He worked at his desk at the bank as little as he could, and began to find out what a limited quantity one can get to eat in Canada on a salary of one pound a week. He thought of writing home for money, but decided not to do so. He gave up smoking as a matter of necessity, and wondered if he could work his passage back, decided "not to stick it," and then was urged by that something which is simply Canada not to give in. He disliked the life, he disliked his desk, and he disliked his fellow-clerks, and yet he did not mean to go back to England or to own himself beaten.

He disliked his desk because he had never sat still for an hour in his life, and had always lived out-of-doors, and had ridden a horse when he wanted to, and had shot things and called it being busy. He disliked his fellow-clerks because they had never shot anything, and because their idea of a holiday was to put on their best clothes and walk out with a girl, also because their ambition was bounded by the day when they

would have enough money to buy a motor car which they called an "ah'tomobile," and because they went to little dances and played about with girls, and looked on at a lacrosse match, which he accused them of calling "the bahl game." He disliked his present life because there was nothing in it to match the life he had known before. He was violently and aggressively English, and he believed that everything that was not English was inferior. He had a conviction that there was only one country worth living in in the world, and that was England, and he stayed on in Canada and loathed every moment of it.

When he found that he could not have even a little pocket money except by extra work, he began to find small jobs to do; but he hated that too, and wished that Royal Ville had never been made. He shovelled snow sometimes when he wanted to buy tobacco.

When his funds were at their lowest there was a gas explosion at the bank. No one was injured, for the explosion occurred at night-time, but many of the rooms were wrecked, and not a pane of glass was left in any of the windows. The occurrence produced a very pleasant feeling

of excitement in the place ; two reporters even came from Toronto and wrote about it, and a photograph of the wrecked house appeared, very indifferently printed, in a local newspaper. One of the bank managers arrived from Montreal and fussed a good deal and talked about insurance, and gave directions to carpenters and builders, and got estimates. Peregrine saw him as he was leaving the wrecked bank, and heard him say that men were to be hired at two dollars a night to guard the safes in the rooms with the paneless windows.

“ Which is a chance for me,” said Peregrine ; and he put on his fur-lined coat and lay down in the bitter cold beside one of the safes in the windowless room, and watched all night.

“ Very promising boy,” said the manager, and meant to keep his eye on him. “ A man who will thus do his duty by the bank deserves to get on.”

The following night Peregrine lay by the safe again and slept in spite of the cold, and the next day the window-panes were repaired and glazed and put back, and he went to the local manager to get his four dollars.

“ I don’t think anything was ever said about

paying you," said the great man, who was short and wore a beard.

"I suppose," said Peregrine, sulking a little, "I guarded the thing as well as any other fellow would have done it."

The manager pointed out that he had only done his duty.

What Peregrine was dying to say was, "Duty be blowed!" but, as he was unable to say that to the bank manager, he merely requested with a sickly smile that he might be paid, and was told in reply that no money would be forthcoming.

Peregrine let all the clerks know what he thought about the incident. He said, "Do you think I care a jot whether the blooming safes are broken into or not? Duty to the bank indeed! Duty to the bank! What does anyone think I lay two nights on the floor for?"

His faith in the equity of things in Canada failed; he never again had any faith in the bank. He always talked of it afterwards as "a rotten concern."

About this time one of the older clerks, who was a good fellow and engaged to be married, told him he ought to go into society. He said there was very good society in Royal Ville, and

he took him to call one Sunday afternoon upon a lady from Surbiton, who was accounted a person of some consequence in the place. She told him that she was an Empire Maker, and said that it was ladies like herself and her daughters who in their own way (that was her modesty) were doing more for Canada than all the legislation and the politics in the world. She said, "When young men come to my house, I always insist upon them treating us as ladies and remembering that they are gentlemen. That is the thought to keep alive in young men's minds: let them remember that they are gentlemen."

Peregrine murmured something which might be assumed to be in agreement with the lady's remark.

She talked ceaselessly, and it was hardly necessary even to reply.

She told him what a noble man her husband was, and what unusual characteristics he possessed. He was able to drink wine without exceeding, and she had never known him make a mistake about anything.

This seemed high praise, and Peregrine rose to go rather than run the risk of meeting such a paragon. His exit, however, was delayed by the

constant stream of conversation which Mrs. Atkinson poured forth. He found that she was of the type that braces and encourages young men, especially in the matter of wearing dress-clothes in the evening. She said that when she and her daughters came to Royal Ville there was hardly a suit of dress-clothes in the place, but so potent for good had been their influence in the place that many young fellows had written home for broadcloth and white ties.

“We expect it,” said Mrs. Atkinson, “and they know we expect it.” She said also that, even when they were alone, she and the Misses Atkinson always made some little change in the evening. “It keeps alive the proper spirit,” she added. She was fond of quoting Mr. Atkinson’s remarks to herself, and always gave them in narrative form. Thus, “As Mr. Atkinson was saying to me this morning, ‘Wifie,’ he said, ‘let Louisa sing to him, that will do him as much good as going to church.’” “Him” was a young man (she explained to Peregrine) who now read Cæsar in the original during his leisure hours.

Peregrine would have liked to speak to Louisa, Pleasance, and Phyllis, but they were so busy

pouring out tea for young men that he was unable to do so.

“We have nothing but old-fashioned English chivalry in this house,” said Mrs. Atkinson, as the young man wandered about politely handing cups.

She asked him to a dance in the following week, and explained that the girls were themselves going to make all the jellies, cakes and trifles, &c., for that was the way she had brought them up; and she added that a lady might be a lady even although she washed her own front doorstep.

Peregrine went to the dance, and was told that his “steps” were all wrong, and that he didn’t dance the Lancers properly.

“It’s the way we dance them at home,” he said loftily; and the young men said he put on side, and one very pretty girl with yellow fluffy hair remarked to her partner (to his intense satisfaction) “that Mr. Boyne fairly gave her the pip.”

Mrs. Atkinson never yielded him a moment’s peace, and not only found him partners at every legitimate pause in the evening’s amusement, but even said, “You are not dancing, Mr. Boyne,” when his feet failed to respond to any

bar of the music. She liked seeing young people really dance when they danced. Mr. Atkinson stood about in doorways and smiled. Also he brewed copious potations of lemonade with a little rum in it, which was enjoyed under the title of rum punch.

Peregrine was as little a success at the dance as he was at the bank. He continued to do his work, and learned to speak doggerel French to the Eastern Canadians who came with cheques which he bade them "signez sur le dos." One day he handed in his resignation because he couldn't do without a horse any longer, and he hired himself to a horse-dealer, where he learned some perfectly new and highly florid oaths.

His father at home, meanwhile, was able to give glowing accounts of him. He was doing well. He would make his mark one of these days. He was the admiration of all those who stopped at home. Everyone wanted to pat on the back the young man who, if he wasn't making a fortune, was no expense to his family.

He got sixty-five dollars a month, and paid fifty dollars for his board and lodging. Things were dear at Royal Ville ; he had asked the price of a pair of boots, and had not bought them.

People told him that he would get things fairly moderate at Eaton's Store in Winnipeg, if he was really going there. Of course he was going to Winnipeg. Everyone who went to Canada must do so. He was waiting his time and trying to remember, as in a sort of dream, that he used to motor to the railway station at home and buy a first-class ticket there. He supposed the local stationmaster would have given him no other ticket than a first-class one.

When he had been at the horse-dealer's for a month, and had made firm friends and affectionate allies of all the Jean Baptistes in the stable (who used the florid oaths), he got the chance which only comes once to a man in a lifetime—he was to take six horses to Winnipeg. His accommodation was an open horse-truck, which would undoubtedly make a man of him, for the weather was unusually cold for the autumn season. During the first part of the journey, and before the horses had eaten it all, he would have some hay to lie on. He departed for the station, which, feeling highly Canadian, he called a dépôt, and he rode one horse and led two others with some danger to his life, for the animals were only half-broken.

Jean Baptiste followed behind with the other three.

Peregrine threw out his chest, and began to grow.

There were half a dozen chosen friends to see him off—a man who washed carriages, a cab-driver who spoke many languages and none of them correctly, and a bar-keeper from Edinburgh who talked magnificent theology when he had had two glasses of whisky. No one arrived empty-handed: it is not in the manner of Canadians to do so. The bar-keeper brought some bottles of lemonade, and accompanied his gift with good advice about not indulging in stronger liquors. The cab-driver arrived with an offering of cakes and bread, and Peregrine had provided himself with an assorted variety of tinned goods (which he called canned when he remembered), but no tin-opener.

The men shook hands with him before he left, called him kid and wished him good-luck, and Peregrine journeyed on and found that to become a man entailed living in a horse-truck open to the sky for eight days and eight nights. The freight train that he was on gave way to every train on the line. It was frequently in sidings,

it frequently stopped ; it jolted and shook, and the men on board of it loved it because they were in Canada and Canada belonged to them, and, being unable to compare the line with any other, they said, and denied contradiction, that it was the finest line in the world. When Peregrine called it the Railroad Track instead of Railway Line, he felt it belonged to him too.

At Winnipeg Peregrine entered on the pig phase which is inevitable with some men in the colonies, and he exulted in it. He had never felt so perfectly happy since he used to make mud-pies in the garden. He wore overalls, he seldom washed, he slept in his clothes, slouched in his walk, spat when he felt inclined, and met every day with a grin on his face. He gave up writing home, acquired the strongest colonial accent that was going about, and began to do jobs. He stuck to nothing, and gained experience every day. When one job was over he used to go to some immigration office, where no fee was asked, and read the notices stuck in the window. They offered employment to all and sundry, and made no reference either to character or to fortune. With his hands stuck in his pockets, and a tattered felt hat on the back of

his head, Peregrine used to stand and gaze in at the window like a child wondering what it will buy : " Teamster wanted, sixty-five dollars." " Flunkey, forty-five dollars." " Cook, seventy dollars." That was the bare plain sense of it. If you were a teamster, and wanted sixty-five dollars a month, you could get it. No one asked if you could drive, no one asked how long you had been in a previous situation, no one asked if you had given satisfaction, no one took up a reference. If you did your work properly as a teamster you would get sixty-five dollars a month, if you did not do your work properly you would get the sack. Peregrine hired himself as a teamster, having never driven a team in his life, and was very soon discharged. Still, he had learned something about the business, and was able to stick to his next job till harvest-time came, and he went and looked in at the window of the immigration office again, and was taken on as a hired man by a farmer. But better money was to be made by threshing, and he left his farmer without a moment's compunction except that he had such jolly little children. Maudie and Kate and Nancy and May, he knew them all, and they cried when he went away, and

he called them "nice little kids," but felt that a man like himself had not much time for them. He liked everyone he met, and they liked him, but it was no use gushing or pretending that you cared a fat lot about anyone. He had always suspected that he hadn't much heart ; now he knew it for a fact, if he had time to think about it. He had a torn copy of the *Pickwick Papers* with him, and when he was out of spirits he read that, and always laughed over it. During the harvest he joined a threshing gang, and slept in a caboose with thirteen men in it, and with every aperture shut that could admit air. Nothing did him any harm, and his lean brown arms began to get great muscles on them. His clothes were in rags, but his blue linen overalls hid all defects, and when he had a weekly shave he sometimes had his hair cut too.

He continued to move Westward, of course. No one is contented in Canada until he has reached the coast. He got as far as Glen Mar, Alb., and went to see Simmons, whose successful sister kept an hotel there. She was a gaunt female who had come out to Canada as a housemaid, and had married a small man who acted as head-waiter. The couple grew rich

upon the supreme discomforts which they offered their guests, and Mrs. Kidner, behind her desk, could make anyone who disputed prices with her feel that he had no business to be in Canada at all. She had a withering glance, and wore a "front" of hair on a net mount, made (virtuously) out of her own combings.

Peregrine had some money in his pocket, and was feeling a bit of a ploot. He ordered a room (through his nose), and Mrs. Kidner, having no idea that he was English, gave him quite a moderate-priced one. He refused all offers of hot water, and lay down on the top of his bed with an old newspaper to read, and in the evening he went and strolled about the pavements of the city with his slouching walk and his hands in his pockets. For thus it is that many a man in Canada spends a day off, and enjoys it very thoroughly too.

Simmons couldn't 'ardly believe his own eyes when he saw Mr. Boyne's name on the register, and, being far too much afraid of his sister to reproach her for not having told him of Master Peregrine's arrival, he turned fiercely upon his brother-in-law, and gave him in a very English voice (to show the difference between them) a

generous piece of his mind. His brother-in-law, who was the one meek man in the West, hardly ventured to say that he had not been in the house at the time, but suggested that Master Peregrine might be in to supper.

“Master Peregrine dines, he does not sup,” snapped the butler.

Mrs. Kidner, for once upholding her husband, remarked that Master Peregrine could never be taken for a gentleman by the look of his clothes, and even to her Simmons said in a snubbing manner that in aristocratic families shabby clothes were the fashion.

He knocked at his late master’s door with a sort of muffled deference when he heard that he had returned to the hotel, and asked from the outside if he might bring him a little hot water.

“Come in,” roared Peregrine, “and quit that knocking.”

He opened the door himself, and stood before the horrified butler in his working clothes, a pipe in his mouth, and a week’s beard on his chin. But his chest was three inches broader than it had been and his eyes were clear. Nothing ever spoilt his complexion. “Waal, Simmons,” he said, “I guess you’re looking fine.”

"I am very well, thank you, sir," said the respectful man, "and I hope you are the same, sir. If I might excuse the remark, Master Peregrine, I should almost say that you have grown. Her Ladyship would be pleased if she could see you now."

"Her Ladyship would think me real dandy, eh? I guess she would jolly well quit if she saw me around," he answered.

"I believe she would hardly know you, sir."

"I am a working man, and a dirty one at that," the young man said, "and I tell you it's fancy."

"Your brothers would not like to hear of dirt, sir, particularly those in the army. I have always said of the family, sir, that it tubbed regular."

"I guess I had a tub a week or two ago."

"I have always understood," said Simmons, "that when an Englishman goes down 'ill, sir, well, he goes down 'ill."

"I revel in dirt, Simmons."

"I could take your boots down and get the Chinaman to clean them, if you would allow me, Master Peregrine, although it's the sickening

'abit of this country to appear in boots with yesterday's mud on them."

"I'll walk round to the shining parlour presently, when I climb into my store clothes."

"Your clothes do not appear to have been folded, sir—"

Simmons was down on his knees before the small portmanteau in which lay the mangled remains of one or two very old suits of clothes, a pair of top-boots, and some shoes which had been packed unbrushed. The portmanteau smelt rather strong, and had evidently not been opened for some time.

"I must get them pressed, sir," said Simmons, alluding to the mashed clothes.

"What's the good of pressing them?" remarked Peregrine, "they'll be all right as they are. Who's going to see them in this dandy burg anyway?"

"There are ladies in the hotel," quoth Simmons, "but I believe they have already dined."

"That makes it all the simpler for me," said Peregrine, and he slouched down to a very unattractive coffee-room and ordered beefsteak, which he helped in one very large portion from the dish to his own plate, and then baptized it

with gravy by the simple expedient of lifting the dish and pouring out its contents on to the steak.

Simmons, who was waiting, speechlessly handed him a spoon.

“It’s all right,” said Peregrine, grinning; “and quit standing behind my chair, Simmons. You are not a blooming waiter.”

“I am in the office, sir; I would not be in the hotel for pounds and pounds.”

Peregrine, who now reckoned by dollars, thought that pounds had the flavour of an ancient fairy story about it.

“Take a pew, Simmons, and order yourself something.”

“In a free country like this,” said Simmons, “we are not allowed to order spirituous drinks after eight o’clock in the evening.”

“Chronological morality,” said Peregrine, laughing.

“Exactly,” said the butler.

The butler took a seat, and endeavoured to lead the conversation towards ’Ome, but beyond “They’re all right, I suppose,” his picture of England did not seem to touch the youth or to interest him.

“ You have picked up a slight haccent, sir,” suggested Simmons respectfully.

“ That I haven’t done,” said Peregrine. “ You should hear some of them chaps on the farm talk.”

“ And have you made a fortune yet, sir ? ”

“ Waal, it looks like it,” said Peregrine, with a backward throw of his head and a laugh ; “ but I am working, that’s what I am doing—I am working, and nothing else counts out here.”

“ It’s not what you are accustomed to, sir.”

“ It’s fine,” said Peregrine. He stuck out his lip, and talked of some exploits of his in a lumber camp, showed his muscles, and remarked that Canada was the finest country in the world.

The butler cleared his throat. He changed the subject not very adroitly, and remarked, “ I dare say you may have heard that they have a new Master of Hounds at home, sir.”

“ No, I hadn’t,” said Peregrine. “ Who is it ? ”

“ Young Lord Linnel.”

“ He can’t ride. What do they want him for ? ” said Peregrine.

Simmons knew all about the various runs which had taken place in the Midland counties. He was always a well-informed man. He also

knew of some hunters that had changed hands, and he read an extract from a letter written by Colonel Boyne's stud-groom and containing much racing and sporting gossip.

"I don't care," said Peregrine, looking sulky and sticking out his lip still farther.

The remark seemed to Mr. Simmons sacrilegious, but he said nothing, and continued his tale about local gossip.

"I wouldn't change Canada for it," said Peregrine truculently.

"Oh, sir!"

"Well, I wouldn't."

The Chinese waiter hovered round them restlessly, a soiled napkin flung across his shoulder. He wanted to get down to the town to gamble, and Simmons was perfectly aware of the fact, and continued to talk about well-bred and aristocratic persons and pursuits.

"Have you seen them shooting out here, Simmons?"

"No, sir, I haven't, and I shouldn't say most of them would be able to hold a gun."

"They shoot the birds sitting," said Peregrine.

"That's what mob rule is bringing us to," said Simmons.

“Why did you come to the place ? ” Peregrine said.

Simmons’ exile seemed to be connected with a statesman always referred to as “that Lloyd-George,” and Peregrine, who had heard all about that before, rose, stretched himself, and said he was going to turn in.

“I could give you a little whisky-and-soda in my room, sir,” the family servitor suggested. “There’s nothing to prevent that, as far as I know, even where democracy ’olds sway.”

“I don’t want anything. Look here, Simmons, I saw a copy of *Punch* in the hotel to-day ; it’s upsetting me.”

“It’s an old one, sir,” said the butler.

“Well, for God’s sake, give it to me, and *The Times* too, if you like. I am going to take them to bed with me, and I don’t want any fool’s talk about horses and hounds.”

The following day he had a tub, and began to speak English.

“You seem very British this morning, sir,” said the man who had folded his clothes, and who now brought him hot water.

“I am feeling British,” he said, with a war-like intonation. “You can get those clothes of

mine pressed if you like, but mind, I am not going to pay a dollar for it."

"I don't think," said Simmons, "that I could be mistaken about either of the two ladies who arrived yesterday."

"The one in the brown dress is not really pretty. I thought she was, until I saw her this morning."

"I do not want to make comparisons," said Simmons, "but there is something about the old country which produces a class of lady—"

"Well, I'm a Canadian," said Peregrine shortly.

"That will pass off, sir," said the deferential man-servant hopefully.

The ladies and Peregrine met like old friends that evening in the hotel. She of the brown dress was clad for dinner in pale blue, all laces and ribbons and exquisitely fresh and clean, while Miss Lucas was suitably dressed in expensive black. She had been taking notes, and meant to give a lecture in the village clubroom on her return to England. She was eloquent on the subject of the differences between Americans, English, and Canadians. Peregrine thought all she said sounded very clever and very true, but

what he was really wondering all the time was whether Miss Drew saw how dirty his hands looked although they had been washed, and whether what Simmons had hinted at about his colonial accent could possibly be true.

Miss Lucas said, "Do dine at our table, won't you?"

They remembered Simmons, and were gracious to him, and Peregrine told himself that he had not heard anyone speak to a servant in exactly the tone these ladies used since he had come to Canada. They shook hands with Simmons in a manner which accentuated the difference between them, because it was so gracious and ignored differences. Simmons loved them, and would have done anything for them, knowing how simply they expected it.

"Simmons is the most British thing I have met in America," said Miss Drew.

"Simmons is a pompous ass," said Peregrine affectionately. "Besides, he is getting fat."

"He unstrapped our trunks for us," said Miss Drew.

"Which the bell-boy wouldn't do," the other lady said.

They said they had come without a maid,

because they didn't believe a maid would stand it. Miss Drew said that, besides, it would have added considerably to the expense of the trip. She was evidently careful. Could she be poor? Simmons had told him that one of the ladies was an heiress.

The next day Peregrine acted as guide to the party, and pretended to know much more about the place than he actually did. When the ladies talked of departing after a day or two he pretended that there was heaps to see, and that they would be missing a very great opportunity by leaving so soon. He waved his hand Westward and said, "You can see the Rockies from here."

"Yes, but we have seen the Rockies, and have been over them," said Miss Lucas. He liked Miss Drew far the better of the two, but to Miss Lucas subsequently he owed an enormous debt of gratitude. Miss Lucas sprained her ankle. She sprained it very slightly, but it swelled. She fussed a good deal over it, and sat with it on a chair, and Peregrine took Miss Drew about, and showed her all the things which he knew nothing about, and assumed the air of an old Canadian settler, and talked about the possibilities of making money in Canada.

"I should like to make money," she said. There was a pause, and then she said, with an effort, "I am very hard up."

He noticed now that Miss Lucas began to pay for things, and that she carried the little black bag with "J. D." upon it. (J., he discovered, stood for Jennie—an entrancing name.)

Miss Lucas had a little sitting-room, because she disliked sitting in her bedroom. She had a great many comforts about her, and a cash-box. Mrs. Kidner of the raven locks began to make out long bills with many extras in them. Her manner, which was always firm, became almost aggressive, and there was a determination about her mouth which said, "Not a penny shall come off on the day of reckoning."

Miss Lucas produced the little black bag and asked Peregrine to pay the account at the desk; and Jennie said, "I had better come with you and explain, for I am perfectly certain none of us ever had oysters."

Peregrine did not refuse her company, and he stood and grinned foolishly at Mrs. Kidner while she suggested, in a very odious way, that if Miss Drew was not satisfied with the hotel she should go elsewhere.

“Such is life in the Far West,” the young lady said to Peregrine appealingly.

He longed above all things that she would pay the bill without a fuss, and to his immense relief she did so. He could really trust her to behave as he liked on all occasions. That was her charm. Of Miss Lucas, on the other hand, he could never feel quite sure. Once she had been telling a Cockney story, and as she came into the hall, where everyone was sitting, she repeated the catchword of it with a Cockney accent.

He looked round apprehensively. Had anyone heard her voice, what would they think of her? It was intolerable to have one of their party speaking with a Cockney accent. At the little table reserved for them everything had been charming. Jennie invariably managed to get flowers somehow, wherever she was. She and Miss Lucas always dressed simply but exquisitely for dinner. When he followed them to the top of the coffee-room, past all the other tables, he had often swelled with pride.

But a Cockney accent! Why had she done it? Just where everyone could hear her, too!

He could not forgive her, and would almost have liked to ask Simmons if he thought

anyone had noticed the way she had spoken. There were other things about her too which were not quite right. She did not draw on her gloves in quite the same way his mother did, and (though of course her ankle may have made her awkward) her manner of getting into a carriage was not perfect.

Simmons in his great-hearted way could guess at small troubles. "These heiresses, sir," he said, "have very often made their fortunes in trade."

Perhaps it was as an example to Miss Lucas that Peregrine now began to wash regularly. No doubt it was to show the difference between them that he had his hair cut. Simmons brushed his clothes, had them pressed, and washed his brushes.

There were some things, of course, which no free Canadian was going to give in about, and Simmons had better not think of trying to reform him. He meant to slouch as he walked, he meant to say "on time" instead of "in time," because that was his pet affectation and had been acquired with difficulty, and he meant to help the gravy without a spoon because of the way in which Simmons, who had taken the little table in charge, always offered him one.

“We are in Canada now,” he used to say truculently.

A man could do as he liked in these matters; a man could spit into the fender if it suited him, but ladies’ behaviour must conform to the nicest standards. He almost wished Miss Lucas and Miss Drew had brought their maid with them, and he was glad to find that they had no ridiculous ideas about sharing a cabin-trunk, but that each possessed a large and good English one made of solid leather. They required afternoon tea too! which was English and delightful of them—the Right Thing, in fact. Once when a clumsy man ran against Miss Drew, as she paused to look in at the windows of the Hudson Bay Store, he saw her rub her arm delicately and murmur, “Tiresome fellow.” The way she said it made him laugh. “We hustle out here,” he said, for the hurt was a very small one. But he helped to rub it too, and the arm was encased in a little grey jacket made of some cloth very soft and smooth. It was almost like touching her arm to stroke it gently.

“Oh, don’t!” said Miss Drew suddenly.

He begged her pardon, and blushed.

“Of course I am awfully grateful to you for minding,” she said.

Quite suddenly he wanted to kill the man who had brushed up against her.

“Confound the brute,” he muttered. “I’ll teach him manners.”

He must carry even the smallest thing for her because of that poor injured arm, and as they approached the hotel he said to her again, “Are you quite sure it is better ? ”

The next day they drove out to see an Indian Reserve, and Miss Lucas was able to go with them, which of course was a great advantage to Miss Lucas, but with an effort of will the other two might have been able to do without her. She continued to say intelligent things, and told them more about the American Indians than they had ever heard before.

Her sprained ankle had given her time for reading up about them. She wasn’t a bad old thing after all, except when she mimicked a Cockney accent in public or said “My dear boy,” an idiotic thing to say to a man of Peregrine’s age.

At the Indian Reserve Peregrine and the younger of the two ladies got lost. It was excessively difficult to get lost, because there was hardly a place where a thing the size of a rabbit

could take cover. But Miss Lucas, with her thirst for information, had insisted upon going over a Mission House which stood in a neat little garden in the Reserve, and Peregrine and Miss Drew were not to be found when she came out.

“Ridiculous infants,” murmured Miss Lucas to herself.

When she had collected her little party, and they had driven back to the hotel, she called Peregrine into her sitting-room, and practically told him, without putting it into so many words, that there must be nothing between himself and Jennie.

“I have charge of her,” she said, “and I must see that nothing of this sort happens.”

“Why?” said Peregrine.

“Why?” repeated Miss Lucas.

She thought for a minute, and then said it wouldn’t do.

He wanted to know, in a certain insistent manner he had, why it wouldn’t do.

She thought again, and said, “Well, for one thing, you have no money, and Miss Drew is a very poor girl.”

His reply, as far as he could remember, was

to the effect that she need not worry about that.

"Yes, but," said Miss Lucas, "you don't seem to understand."

"No, I don't," he said.

"I wish I could speak more plainly," went on Miss Lucas, "but Jennie is an odd girl, and she has laid so many promises upon me that I hardly know how to speak without betraying a confidence."

"Do you know, Miss Lucas," he said earnestly, "I do believe we had better manage our own affairs."

So it had come to that, then! Miss Lucas trembled to think what she would say to Mr. and Mrs. Drew at home, and she sat and meditated upon whether or no anything could be done.

In the evening she stormed the citadel of family affection in Miss Drew's heart. She asked her, first of all, whether she wanted to break her parents' hearts; secondly, whether she wanted to leave them for ever and live in Canada; and thirdly, whether she supposed for a minute that "it" was anything more than a passing fancy on Peregrine's part.

“All men in Canada propose,” said Miss Lucas.

“It’s very odd,” said Jennie, smiling.

“You don’t mean to say he has already done so?”

The young lady remained silent.

“He is a fortune-hunter,” said Miss Lucas.

“Now, Emily, you know that is impossible,” retorted her young companion. “We have kept the secret absolutely. I have complained of the price of every carriage that we have had. I have looked in at the windows of Hudson Bay Stores and longed for things. I have compared prices Canadian and English. I have said everything is dearer here till I am tired of the phrase.”

Miss Lucas looked the young girl straight in the eyes, and then because women, like history, have a bad habit of repeating themselves, she remarked, as Peregrine’s mother had once remarked before, “I don’t believe that boy is such a fool as he looks.”

“Fool?” said Miss Jennie, bristling—“fool, Emily?”

Still, it’s no use quarrelling with a travelling companion; the thing has been done too often to be amusing.

“Of course,” said Miss Lucas, relenting, “I know I have had an excellent time at your parents’ expense. That makes me all the more responsible, and I am wondering if I ought to write home and tell them.”

“Tell them what?” said Jennie.

That was a poser if you like!

“At least,” said Miss Lucas earnestly, “promise me to do nothing definite.” The appeal struck her as being a desperate one, and she rounded it off feebly by saying, “It would break their hearts, and we really know nothing about the young man.”

The following day was Sunday. Miss Lucas, on being asked if she would go to church, said that she could not let her ankle hang down all that time: it would increase the swelling.

That was settled, anyway! Miss Drew suggested to Peregrine that he should be her escort.

“I don’t go to church,” he growled.

Fortunately Miss Drew did not say, “You ought to go to church.” She put her head ever so slightly on one side, just as if her fur collar were not quite warm enough, and said, “I really want you to take me.”

He would have walked into the jaws of a

Presbyterian kirk and listened to a sermon an hour long !

Probably it belongs to regular churchgoers to sing hymns and say the responses aloud. Peregrine gnawed the corner of his Prayer-book, and remained silent throughout the service. The odd part of it was the way church made you remember things, and how it even made you tamper with realities, so that the collects, which you always hated learning, began to have a sort of glory about them, such as you see, for instance, in quite common things when the sun sets behind them. Every one of his brothers became good and old, his sisters had excellent points, and the governor was a fine old fellow. He could not think of him except in his Yeomanry uniform, and even then he forgot how extraordinarily tight it used to be. But he smiled over the time-honoured family jest, made on many mornings in the year, that Colonel Boyne always put his chin in the air and rang the bell for Simmons to tell him if he had his neck-tie on. Just at present he wasn't going to allow himself to think about his mother. She had always been infernally good to him—a bit of the right sort.

Rather rot to think of all these things ! Work

and Canada were the only realities, and it was high time he turned to work again and quitted playing about, or his muscles might grow soft. He had a few English sovereigns, but he meant to change them into dollars, because sentiment was so silly. Also, "the chaps" thought everything English notified that pride which is called putting on frills. Good fellows, heaps of them, and as he had to live his life amongst them—

He meant to have a home of his own some day—in Canada, of course—with a sensible wife who would be able to cook for him and who had no nonsense about her.

And oh, how he would detest her! How he would detest any woman who hadn't grey eyes and brown hair and soft fur about her neck, and whose hands were not perfectly beautiful and perfectly useless, and who wasn't full of dear affectations—who wasn't, in fact, to put the matter briefly, the young lady who was driving him pretty nearly off his head by kneeling beside him as if he and she were an old married couple, and who kept her eyes closed and said "Amen" in such a way that he felt jealous of the very angels in Heaven, who were no doubt listening

to her. Peregrine was mad, wholesomely and sanely and pleasantly mad. As the day wore on the malady grew worse. He hardly now remembered the incident of having forcibly taken her Prayer-book from her, because she dared to think of carrying it herself. He forgot having saved her from certain death at a street crossing. All that had happened ages ago, before they were engaged to be married—before he had lost his head entirely, before Simmons had meanly glanced over the banisters on purpose to see them coming upstairs with their hands locked, and before all the world had begun to rock in an inexplicable way to a glorified ragtime.

Two foolish young people were engaged to be married, and Miss Lucas, poor soul, had to bear the brunt of it. She preached caution, knowing it to be far too late, and she tried in vain to bring a young man and a young woman out of the clouds by saying that other people had got engaged to be married before, which was an absurdity upon the face of it. At least no Peregrine Boyne and Jennie Drew had ever been engaged to be married before, so theirs, at least, was a unique experience. She even continued to tell lies (on the highest principle) about Jennie's want of fortune.

“ I have told him all about that,” said Jennie, “ and he has forgiven me.”

Then Miss Lucas desperately and finally locked horns with the young man, whom she thoroughly liked and entirely sympathised with, and determined to oust him from the field.

“ Did you know all the time,” she said, “ that Miss Drew was the heiress, and not I ? ”

To which Peregrine replied that it was their own fault, and he thought they had done it rather badly.

Sensation ! Overdone sensation on the part of Miss Lucas, who, knowing her responsibilities, felt it her duty to struggle even after the day was lost, and who from sheer honesty, and because her expenses had been paid, knew that she ought to have prevented a calamity of this sort from happening.

Simmons in the end had to be summoned—Simmons, who thought that any connection with the family of Boyne must be to the advantage of the “ other party ” ; Simmons, who spoke of the splendour of “ our place ” and its strong-room and its family portraits, and who declared his intention of returning home to be present at the nuptials. Even Miss Lucas felt the weight of this guarantee of respectability.

Peregrine tipped him his last five English sovereigns before leaving the hotel, and Simmons took his railway ticket for him in the old way, and would doubtless "put it down with the other things at the end of the month"; and Peregrine said "All right," but saved his dignity by adding, "Only don't call it a ticket, Simmons. We Canadians always say 'railroad transportation.'"

THE HOUSE IN THE WOOD



THE HOUSE IN THE WOOD

THERE is a quality of silence about some parts of Canada which is an immanent, almost a sentient thing. It is possible to believe that it is touched with a personality of its own, and when we speak of it there is ever in our minds the strange feeling that we are close to something which is not merely the negation of noise or sound. It is near us though uncomprehended, and filled with voices which are yet not audible to the ear.

In this silence and in this solitude something encroaches quite persistently upon us : some of us resent it, and nearly all of us are conscious of it. The lonely trapper probably understands it ; the Indian in his canoe, had he the power of expression, would probably translate the voices to us ; and the hunters who watch by still waters, where hardly a reed rustles, have been swayed by the mystery of it without being able to explain.

There is a wood many miles from a French-

Canadian village in Eastern Canada where the silence seems more audible than in any other place I have known. And the silence is accentuated by the fact that on the edge of the wood there is a brawling river running deep and strong, with great rocks in it, over which the white water roars, and hardly is it possible for a man to hear even a close companion's voice as he talks to him. Nearer the ford the river is broader and shallower and quieter, and when one has crossed it and climbed the bank on to the other side, the silence seems quite suddenly to take hold of one, and the very rustle of the trees has a muffled sound which reminds one of the soft voice with which people speak in a sick-room or near the chamber of him who lies dead. Even the cries of birds seem to have a different inflexion in the muffled woods, and there is no chorus of them there, but just a little startled cry now and then which breaks the still air piercingly.

In winter-time snow lies thick and heavy in the wood, and the last traces of it have hardly disappeared by May. There are foxes in the wood in winter-time, who trot about on their soft little pads and are not afraid to leave a trail behind them, for no hunters come this way,

though bear are sometimes seen, and even push their way down to the outskirts of the French village when the winter is a hard one. In the winter even the river is frozen and silent, but in summer it breaks into loud rejoicings, and leaps and rushes towards its chosen destination far away to the Great Lake, where elk with their wide horns roam, and where fishermen come in summer-time. But when spring breaks the wood beyond the river is strangely quiet, and we lower our voices and talk in whispers when we get there.

In a clearing in the wood is a house where Michael Sturge and his wife lived, and where their children were born and where his wife died. Perhaps it was not so still once, when children's voices woke the echoes of the place, but it is long since children lived there, and long since Michael fled from the house.

Madame L—— told me this story as we sat in her little room, furnished with treasures of Empire furniture brought thither by her French ancestors, and still remaining as they had them, with delicate brocade covering the cushions, and the black and gilt of the old couches dimmed but not tarnished with time. There were roses in

the vases on the mantelpiece, and a little Empire clock with a glass shade to it. On the table was a statuette of Napoleon, and the prints on the walls were French of a bygone period. Madame L—— belonged to the furniture as much as it did to her. Together they made a delightful whole, and the beauty and simple air of comfort about the place was doubly welcome, being, as it were, something loving and companionable on the edge of vastness. The white painted wood of the house gave it a cheerful air, the bedrooms were hung with bright chintz, and the balcony was furnished with rocking-chairs in which one swung gently and watched the villagers go past. Some day, perhaps, the little village will boom as other places in Canada have boomed, and it will be impossible to find any trace of the village street and the little wooden houses with their verandahs. But at the time I visited it, it was unspoilt, untouched by enterprising builders, and undisturbed by Land Investment Companies.

Madame L—— and I had been for a walk on the roads, which were still damp from the recently melted snows, and now we had drunk our tea out of delicate cups, and had seen them put away

in the shining pantry. We tipped our chairs luxuriously backwards, and looked with interest at the passers-by, most of whose history Madame L—— was able to tell me before they reached the end of the village street. The charm of the place was its naïve simplicity, and the histories of the villagers seemed, for the most part, as naïve and simple as the place itself. Madame L—— told me much of the inherent contentment of the French-Canadians, and I myself was personally acquainted with their courtesy and good manners. It was always a pleasure to meet one of them on the road and to get his greeting in the French of long ago, which the Paris of to-day would probably not understand. Their lives were bound up and filled with love of their large families and the honest toil. They were frugal, and in winter-time would often go to bed before eight o'clock in order to save fuel and lights, while in summer weather they would sit on the verandah, coatless and wearing broad hats, while their children played about them. They reverenced the curé, who himself, good man, gave me an excellent character of the place and its inhabitants.

I was tempted to call the village Arcadia, but

Madame L—— shook her head and said, "Ah, but we have tragedies too. Last year Henri Gudefin lost two of his children from pneumonia in one week, and there is poverty too amongst us, although our wants are so simple that a kindly neighbour who tries to supply them would probably not go bankrupt. Monsieur le Curé breaks his heart over us sometimes—even he, I think, smiles on our little follies oftener than he condemns us. Those who live buried in the snow for six months every year must have a little kindness shown to them!"

"I think I want to live always in a small French-Canadian village," I said, being filled with the peace of the place and its fragrance.

"Wait till you see us in winter," she said.

I told her her house was too snug to make even winter a matter of dread.

"We have our tragedies too," she said, "although, thank God, they are rare. Le bon Dieu does not forget us, but wherever He is there seems to come His enemy also."

"Not in this dear village!"

"Yes, and beyond the village in quiet places where hardly it would be believed a man could bring his wrongdoings. There are tragedies there also."

She asked me if I had seen the clearing in the wood and the old house which stood there, and it reminded me that I had meant to ask her the story of it.

“I will take you there,” she said; “you will understand the story better when you have seen it.”

That afternoon Henri Gudefin came with his funny little carriage, which, I think, must have been innocent of springs, and we bumped for a great many miles over the uneven roads, Henri himself driving us, and spitting all the time. The journey did not lend itself to much speaking, but the country in springtime was inexpressibly beautiful, and the flowers that bordered our way gave the place the semblance of a garden. Birds were singing, and the sun was so bright and strong that we were glad to be sitting under the tilt of the little carriage. Henri talked to his horse all the time, but neither his continuous “*Marche! marche!*” nor the cracking of his whip induced it to move a pace faster. All of us were a little sleepy, and we jogged along contentedly, while the warm, damp, brown earth and a thousand flowers gave forth their scents, and the long line of blue sky stretched itself drowsily overhead.

When we reached the river we left the carriage and Henri Gudefin and the indifferent horse, and walked by a path along the river-side. The feeling of coolness which the rushing torrent gave was very welcome after the heat of the road, and we walked with a great feeling of enjoyment after our cramped drive. Madame L—— knew every yard of the way. She told me that this river had been the favourite picknicking-ground of her childhood, and the happiest days that she remembered had been passed there.

“There is the bridge now,” she said, “where the old ford used to be through which we used to have to ride, and now, I am told, there are going to be sawmills at the mouth of the river.”

“Yes,” I said impatiently, “and those falls where pixies live and rainbows dwell are going to be harnessed to huge revolving wheels, and the forests will fall as soldiers fall in ranks in battle, and money will be made, and we shall hear that the place has become a success.”

“Already a whole forest has fallen not many miles from here,” she said, “and the hillside looks like a shaved and shorn head.”

We grumbled contentedly for a time over the view of Canada as merely a money-making pro-

position, and later we found the bridge of rough hewn planks, and walked across it, and so into the wood beyond.

The wood, I noticed, as I had noticed the only time I visited it before, bore a curious stillness and silence which smote one abruptly so that one turned from it as people sometimes turn back to the doorway where light streams, when they have entered a dark room.

“This is rather terrible,” I said.

“Even children notice it,” Madame L—— replied, “and will never come to this part of the wood alone.”

Both of us were believers in ghosts, and I asked her if she had ever seen anything unusual or uncanny in the wood.

“No,” she said, “but it was there. He saw it.”

“Who?”

“Michael Sturge, the man who lived there.”

“Is that why the house is empty?”

Madame L—— nodded.

We walked a little farther and came to the clearing in the wood, and there stood the old brown house unexpectedly, as it were, in the shade of the great trees which stood round about it.

Everywhere there was evidence that, crude though the workmanship was, the house had been designed for comfort. There was a broad verandah which may once have served as a sleeping-parlour, and windows which sagged oddly now, but which had evidently once looked on to a flower-garden. Everything was overrun with a tangle of creepers and undergrowth, and here and there were the stumps of trees which had been cut down or burned. A fox, startled, was coming in its eerie, soft-footed way out of what had evidently been a woodshed. The door of the woodshed was the only one that remained open. Everything else was shut. The windows, although they sagged, were still glazed, and at the rear of the house there was another wooden building which had evidently been a coach-house and stable, with a little outside wooden staircase running to a loft perhaps, or a sleeping-place for servants.

“It is just as Michael Sturge left it,” Madame L—— said. “You may look at it if you like.”

Together, stepping softly as those do who walk over graves, we walked up what must once have been the approach to the house, but was now a tangle of weeds, with a few stones showing here

and there, and some delicate flowers growing at intervals amongst the weeds. The clearing had once been extensive, and we could see through the encroaching growth of trees a line of hills away to westward. I drew my breath, and said, "What an enchanting place for a house!" It seemed a thousand melancholy pities that it now should be given up to be the abode of bats and owls, and it was with a feeling of resentment that I remarked to Madame L——, "Our friends, the ghosts, have much to answer for." She had mounted a flight of wooden steps leading to the balcony, and thither I followed her, and stood for a moment on its creaking boards to survey the scene about me, and once again I was struck by its almost extravagant beauty and its sadness.

"You may look inside," said Madame L——.

"But it's empty, is it not?" I said.

At first I could see nothing in the interior of the house, because the dimness of the windows rendered it obscure, but afterwards I found that, by putting up my hands to prevent the shimmer of light upon the panes, I could see with some clearness into the interior of the rooms.

I think I shall never forget my astonishment

at the sight which met me in the midst of a ruined, deserted, and all but falling house.

The drawing-room or parlour—for that was the room into which I seemed to be looking—was still fully furnished, and I may say beautifully furnished. Certainly the paper was peeling from the walls, and at one side a great roll of it hung down almost to the floor, but there was a marble mantelpiece, and above it the picture of a lady, while all about the room were specimens of beautiful old furniture. Some of it was of the period which in America is called Colonial, but the designs, though simple, were beautiful in form. In front of the window, and with its back to me, was an old sofa with a quaintly carved frame, while against the opposite side of the wall were two old Empire cabinets of the rarest beauty and design. There was a spinning-wheel in the middle of the room with a handful of wool still hanging on it, and what surprised me still more was to see a piano and a harp. The floor was covered with a carpet which, in spite of the dust which overlaid it, I could guess to be a priceless Aubusson, and on either side of the wall were coloured prints in black and gold frames. The door of the parlour was open,

and beyond I could see a hall with a big bureau in it, a settle, and a wide fireplace.

Stung with curiosity, I hastened round the balcony to the south side of the house, and again looked in one of the windows. Here was what was evidently a lady's small boudoir. There were china figures on the mantelshelf, and a gilt mirror, whose glass was blotched and grey, hung above it. There were little French couches and chairs with slender gilt legs that looked as though they danced. The floor was of wood, but there were rugs of faint colouring still stretched upon it, and, at a table under a glass case, was a gilt clock whose pendulum represented a little figure on a swing. There appeared to be a bedroom beyond, with a four-post bed in it, and I had a vision of some silk hangings, but was not able to see them very clearly.

“Mrs. Sturge was French,” Madame L——’s voice said at my elbow. “When she married, she brought all her own furniture with her. And Michael was a rich man ; he brought the marble chimney-pieces from his house in Quebec.”

“But,” I gasped, “this furniture is unique ; it cannot be reproduced now. This house, what does it mean ? ”

" You are not in a dream," said Madame L——, smiling a little.

" Even if you were to pinch me," I replied, " I should still feel inclined to say, ' That also is part of the dream.' "

" It was never a dream," she said. " I often wish it had been."

Together we went down the crazy steps of the verandah, holding on to the tottering rail, and we sat in the wilderness which had once been a garden in the clearing of the forest, and she said to me: " Michael adored his wife, but I cannot tell whether she was happy with him or not. She was not a Canadian—I understand he met her in Paris—and, for all the beauty of its surroundings, this house must have been a lonely place for any woman. I think her pretty furniture was some sort of comfort to her. I know she used to try to add to it sometimes, and on the rare occasions when she went to Quebec she always brought back something with her. In these days, of course, the collecting spirit is strong in everyone, but when Marie Sturge lived here no one could understand her love for old furniture."

" Furniture," I said, " is not lifeless: there is

a great sense of companionship in a room which is beautifully furnished."

"Yes," said Madame L——, "and by and by Madame had her children to keep her company, and yet I do not think she was happy. Heaven knows what may have been wrong; I only know that when consumption attacked her she seemed to pass very peacefully out of life, and as if she had no regrets at leaving it."

"Mrs. Sturge is not more dead than her house is," I said. "I have never seen a more lifeless place."

I hardly liked to speak my thoughts aloud, lest the feelings which I was then experiencing might, if they found expression, sound morbid to my companion.

But it seemed to me then, and has seemed to me ever since, that these old houses, which certainly have a character and an individuality of their own, go through a period of decay analogous to that which takes place in the human species, and that possibly at some time of their existence they die. I felt when I first came across the House in the Wood as if I had inadvertently stumbled upon a corpse.

This feeling was heightened when Madame

L—— told me that Mrs. Sturge had died there.

“ Michael was heartbroken,” she went on, “ and even his children seemed to be no comfort to him. I remember saying to him once, using the conventional mode of consolation which we find it hard to escape from when a friend has suffered a bereavement, that the four little creatures—who, indeed, were the most charming children—might prove to be a comfort to him. He said to me, ‘ I would part with every one of them to have one day more of my wife’s company.’ He got a nurse for them, and she seemed to be an excellent woman, although some might say too young for the post.”

“ But Michael Sturge’s love for his dead wife,” I said, “ saved him from any of the ordinary dangers of such a situation.”

Madame L—— was silent for a time, and when our voices had ceased upon the stillness of the place the eerie twilight of voicelessness closed in upon us again. A bluebird came wafting into the cleared circle where the house stood, and, wheeling suddenly with a strong stroke of its wings, it flew with a cry from the place, as if startled by something which it had seen. The

shut windows of the house looked like closed lids of eyes ; only a branch of roses, once perhaps carefully tended and now straggling across the roof of the verandah, gave evidence that it had ever been inhabited.

“ Monsieur le Curé used to ride out here, and see Michael and the children sometimes. Sometimes, I think, he had fears for him.”

There was a pause, and in it I felt as if the gentle spirit of the delicate invalid wife had passed from the place, and that something stronger and more tragic was here.

“ About two years later another child was born in this house,” said Madame L——, “ and there was about its coming all the mystery and the difficult and painful concealment which guilt brings.”

“ I believe you would rather not talk about it,” I said.

“ I will finish the story,” said Madame L——.

“ A child was born, and the woman died. I believe both of them are buried near here.”

“ Can that account for the sadness of the place ? ”

“ I do not know. The sadness of the thing itself impressed me very deeply at the time.

For I believe I knew, as no one else did, that, in spite of all that happened, Michael retained a curious, twisted sense of loyalty towards his dead wife all the time. I shall not ask you to believe the gossip of the place, that had the woman who replaced her received greater attention and more skilled medical attendance, her life might have been spared. Such things are easily said, but even I have to admit that Michael seemed to experience a sense of relief when the whole incident was closed. He never had anyone else to look after the children. The eldest of them was a clever, capable girl, who adapted herself wonderfully to the task. The very last time I saw Michael I was struck by the fact that, after many disturbing things had passed out of his life, he was settling down into rather an ordinary round of existence—just working, eating common fare, and resting. He was a man of education, yet he seldom opened a book, and it was evident that he was growing slovenly in his habits and even uncouth in his speech. In the old days, when his wife used to sing and play to him, one understood that the evenings in this solitary house were spent in a manner very refined and charming. Michael himself used to sing. Before

I go further, let me try to take back or explain something I said to you just now. Marie may have been perfectly happy with her husband and her children. She was one of those fragile and delicate-looking women, with a fresh spontaneity of manner which I now believe hid a good deal of reserve. Perhaps it was her delicacy ; she used to give me the feeling that she looked sad, or it may have been that this place was too remote and solitary for her."

"One can imagine the pleasant evenings," I said.

"Yes, but three hundred and sixty-five of them in a year!" Madame L—— shrugged her shoulders.

"You are French—"

"Marie was French too, and was, moreover, accustomed to a simple but very social life in Paris."

"It is perhaps really the only sociable place in the world," I said.

"Even the yellow drawing-room and the little boudoir—"

"—Were a prison. A prison with cut-glass chandeliers and an Aubusson carpet!"

"No one sat in the drawing-room after Marie

died. The family migrated to the kitchen, and Michael settled down to a boorish existence with some contentment. They say no one can feel keenly always : perhaps his day came for feeling when he was older.

“ Anyone will tell you how this peaceful existence came to an end. The story is well known in the place, and if the evidence of a man half mad with terror is true, then I think this story is true. Michael was a sober man ; I do not think his word is to be doubted.

“ He used to come in from work about six o’clock in the evening, and have an early supper with his children, and then it was his habit to sit upon the verandah.

“ It was twilight on the last night that he sat there, and it was still not quite dark when he fled from the place, and when his children sobbing with terror followed him through the wood. They had eerie tales to tell afterwards of what he had babbled forth when, in his fear, he had called to them to come to him, and had shrieked of Emily, who stood beside him all in flames—Emily whom the children had loved, and who had looked after them with great kindness for two whole years. No one but their father saw her,

although he gibbered and pointed at the place where she stood. In his agony he took hold of his eldest child by the shoulders, and asked her if she did not hear what Emily was saying, and when she shook her head he began to shriek again, saying, 'She says I brought her to it, I brought her to it.'

" 'See what you have brought me to,' those were the words she used, and those are the words which are used even now amongst the village people when they tell the story.

" The children clung about their father in terror as he pointed and raved, and when at last he started to run through the wood, they followed him.

" Late that night they arrived at the village, and some of us saw them and did what we could for them, for they were a miserable little company. All through it seemed incoherent at first, and it was from the eldest girl I heard most of the story. There was an untenantied house near the church, and they sheltered there for the night.

" They never came back to the house in the wood again, and from that day to this I believe no one has ever entered it. Even tramps avoid

it, and those who find their way to it by the lonely path by which we came have looked in at the windows, just as you and I have done, but I have never seen the dust on the threshold disturbed."

"And Michael?"

"Michael and the children sailed for England. I do not know what became of them."

Madame L—— rose from her seat in the empty garden, and I gave her my hand to help her up, for she said she was getting stiff with sitting.

"And it is getting very cold," I said.

"It is always colder here than anywhere else," she replied.

We did not speak again all the way through the wood and down to the brawling river. But, when we came back to the place where the saw-mills are to be built, we found Henri Gudefin waiting for us with the little carriage, and his honest red face gave us a feeling of security, as though we had come back suddenly from beyond the grave to a world of living things. He cracked his whip, and bade his horse *marche! marche!*—and Madame L—— and I bumped home again over the long, uneven road.

"I would not have told you the story," she was saying, "did I not know it to be true."

THE HONEYMOON

THE HONEYMOON

IT was the season known in Eastern Canada as the January Thaw. The roads were a bog into which big, light flakes of snow fell and melted. The sky was blotted out by a mass of cloudy vapour that hung as low almost as the trees, and like them seemed to drip moisture—first of all rain, then snow, then again rain. The big station at Toronto, in and out of which trains seemed to glide indiscriminately, was emptier than usual, and the platform was almost unoccupied except for a group of persons, mostly young, who had stood there waiting for the train a good forty minutes. During the whole of that time they attempted to be comic. The comedy was spasmodic, artificial, unhumorous, but the attempt was brave. The young women of the party wore finery which was too light for the condition of the weather, but which they could not bring themselves to conceal by cloaks. The men were well wrapped up and supplied the jokes—such as they were. Between the jokes there

was often a dead silence, and then some courageous soul would find something to say, and would say it. It was always met with spasms of high-pitched laughter. The girls were particularly loyal, and of course the situation was a humorous one. A girl—one of their number—had, an hour or two before, been married. She was the smallest of the group and the thinnest, and her narrow skirt gave her almost an attenuated appearance. Her little hands held tightly a small travelling-bag, and on her head was a huge hat, the only big thing about her. Under it, her face looked like that of a tiny mouse peeping out from under a shock of corn. She wore high-heeled boots, and a checked steamer-coat reaching to her heels. The bridegroom was not so easily discovered. He was merely one of the group of young men who made spasmodic jokes. Had it not been that from time to time the young ladies of the party quite suddenly, and without apparent reason, sprinkled paper confetti upon him, he might have remained undiscovered. He did not address the bride, and he seemed to be rather a bucolic young man whose wit was not equal to that of the others. Perhaps a forty minutes' wait at a cold station had damped it.

Once or twice the girls walked to the end of the station and back, stamping their feet, and then formed into the group again, and sprinkled confetti and laughed. Sometimes they shoved each other and the young men, and laughed at that too. Sometimes they told the bride to buck up. She was obviously nervous, and seemed in need of bucking. Once she approached the bridegroom, and, tugging at him by the coat-sleeves, said, "Do you think it will be in soon, Willie?" and Willie shook himself free and said he didn't know. He may have been afraid of a demonstration of affection in public.

The bride walked back to the group of girls, and her pinched little face looked smaller under the gigantic hat. The snow outside yielded to rain, which swept in at the far end of the station; and the girls said they thought the rain was almost colder than the snow, and began to walk up and down again. But there was evidently a fear that unless they remained more or less attached to the group some joke might be missed, so that always on their journeys backwards and forwards they attached themselves to it temporarily, and gave their punctual little screams of laughter, and smote the men on the shoulders,

and walked on again. Some of the men said, "Why didn't you bring jackets?" and the girls replied that they were not cold.

At last silence fell even upon the laughing group. The men wondered what had become of the train, the bridegroom took out his watch several times, the bride looked as if she wanted more than anything else to find some bench on which to sit down. Darkness began to fall early, and the men said that they hoped there had been no breakdown anywhere. The girls said spasmodically, "I hope you have got your bag all right, Selina." "I guess I have got it right here," the bride answered, patting it.

Another girl said, "You will dine on board the train, of course," and the bride replied, "We shan't be in till very late; it is a pity the train isn't on time."

All the last speeches had been made, even the last farewells had been uttered, jokes were exhausted: there seemed nothing left but the hope that one might be the first to see the train coming.

When it came there was all the bustle of farewells and fresh jokes, and "write soon" and "good-luck," and getting in and out of the

carriage, and frenzied excitement lest this one should be carried away and that one left behind ; there were also many "take cares." Bridesmaids hopped in and out and blocked corridors, and had to be told to stand aside, and luggage checks became lost at the critical moment and were found again.

And when all the excitement was over the train had no obvious intention of moving on, and the group on the platform were evidently loyal in their combined determination not to let the bride and bridegroom depart without last hand-shakes and last hand-waves. Jokes began again —jokes shouted to the very small bride and the bucolic bridegroom as they stood upon the steps of the train.

These also died away at last. The final departure promised to be flat ; all eyes were fixed upon the engine, whose every snort was interpreted as a hopeful sign that it might soon depart. One of the young ladies (in fawn) pretended to court disaster by dashing once more into the train, where she fell against hand-luggage being carried down the corridors, and then, with well-simulated panic, she rushed out on to the platform again, waved her handkerchief, prepared a

few tears, and heard from the coloured porter that there was no hurry.

The confetti were exhausted. The bride sat down, and was asked if she would like a scent-bottle. As this was not forthcoming there could only be renewed hopes that she would not be tired before she arrived.

The bridegroom descended once more from the train, and began to talk business to a friend. Nothing was heard but the reiterated word "dollars."

"It is more than an hour late," said the best man.

"Yes, and we were early," said the bridegroom. He went on talking about dollars again, and the bridesmaids tapped on the window and told the bride to buck up.

One of the groomsmen suddenly disappeared. He was ever afterwards believed to be the hero of the occasion.

A little conversation was provoked by his unexpected absence, and fervent utterances to the effect that everyone hoped young Wilbur would not be late furnished subject matter once more for speech.

Young Wilbur appeared at the far end of the

platform carrying a roll of paper with him. He was a well-known wag, but never had his intellect been brighter, never had it provoked a more welcome interlude than to-day. Young Wilbur had surpassed himself, but the full meaning of his joke did not dawn until, with the white paper roll now partially concealed under his coat, he climbed into the train and approached the window where the bride sat. Then, with wonder and with shrieks of laughter, young Wilbur's joke was seen and appreciated. His roll of paper was some railway announcement lettered in blue, and on its reverse side young Wilbur had written in enormous round text and many flourishes "The Great 'Steal' Combine."

Oh, what laughter there was over that ! What shrieks, what pointing at the round text, what calling of each other's attention and everyone's attention to the paper pinned up against the window. The bride left her seat, and came down on the platform again to see what all the laughter was about. What jokes at her expense ! What nudgings and pinchings !

Even the bridegroom said, "I guess that's dandy."

The joke, seen from all sides and with fresh exclamations at its wit, lasted another good fifteen minutes, and then the train moved off. Its end was not peace but uproarious fun, and all about the Great Steal Combine. It roared itself out of the station at last, whistling and shrieking, but the laughter of those left behind on the platform was louder still. The handkerchief-waving grew frenzied. The bucolic bridegroom smirked a little. He talked about young Wilbur's joke for the first dozen miles or so of the journey, and then a man called out, "First call for supper," and he rose and went down the long corridor of the lurching, swaying train, while the bride with her little handbag followed behind, and was pitched against chairs and begged people's pardon, and was frightened at crossing the little bridges between the swaying coaches, and arrived at last at the restaurant car, which young Wilbur had facetiously alluded to as the pie-box (young Wilbur's humour never failed).

She could not eat her dinner, and said her head ached, and her husband remarked, "Why don't you take your hat off?" The suggestion no doubt was a wise one, but the hat was precious :

she could not part with it. The bridegroom said no wonder her head ached. He said further, and in a tone of self-congratulation, "I don't understand you women."

She drank iced water, and removed her glove in order to look at her wedding-ring, and the bridegroom said, "You ought to have some of this duck ; it's fine." She shook her head, and drank some more iced water, and replied, in answer to his inquiries, that she was feeling quite well.

"That was a fine joke of Wilbur's," he said.

"My !" she said, "Wilbur *is* a sport."

"The Great Steal Combine !" he muttered, as though tasting the joke afresh.

After dinner he went to sleep, and the bride sat looking out of the window and watched the snow drift across it and settle like great round seals for a moment on the window, and then melt and fall trickling down. The lamps within the train lighted up the snow oddly, making it look like little fairies peeping out of the darkness. In the corridor beds were made up for the night, and green curtains were drawn and the lights in the roof of the carriage were lowered, and the bride, with her small white face, sat in her corner and looked out into the darkness.

She and her husband would reach their destination about midnight (the train being so late). Whenever the train stopped she looked out to read the name of the station, hoping that by some miracle the lost time might have been made up, but knowing full well how many miles there were still to travel.

All the other passengers settled down to sleep now ; most of them were snoring. The coloured porter sat on a leather-covered chair in the corridor and snored too, with his head hanging forward on his chest. The bride herself might have rested more comfortably had she removed her hat, but it was the most beautiful one she had ever seen, and the smartest, and it meant much more to her than either beauty or smartness. Had her mother come with her on her marriage journey—her mother, who had once been a bride too—comforting and consoling and giving her moral support, she could hardly have been more to her than was the hat. Without it she might have shed tears ; without it she might have felt like going home again. She looked at the reflection of her hat against the dark of the window, and saw its noble outline and its feather, and she went forward through the snowy night,

and with the sleeping passengers all about her, and with her husband snoring on the seat beside her.

“Now then, ma’am,” said the coloured porter, who always awoke automatically a few minutes before the train entered a station, “what luggage have you? I guess, mister, the next stoppage is your destination.”

He was a man difficult to wake, but the bride twitched at his sleeve, and said, “Willie, you might wake up now—we are home.”

He rubbed his eyes, and began to look for his hat, and asked her if she had everything.

“Don’t forget your cane,” she said, and he reached it down from the rack above his head.

She straightened her hat, and the coloured porter, with his little brush, brushed some dust from her checked coat. No one but those three seemed to be stirring on board the train; everyone else was sound asleep in the dim light of the corridor. The bridegroom himself was only half awake, but the bride’s eyes were large and alert, and looked as though they would not close soon.

They walked down the platform of the electric-

lighted station under the glare of its lamps. The station evidently belonged to a very small town, and no one was astir except one official in a fur-lined coat, who said the train was late. Beyond the station appeared to be a single line of road with shops on either side of it, all closed for the night, and with the silent snow laying a carpet along the length of it while folk slept.

As the train started again, the young couple walked along this side-walk, each burdened with a flat suit-case or valise, and the bride was struggling with an umbrella too, in order to protect her very large hat.

Suddenly she stopped and placed the hand luggage she was carrying on the snowy path. Her eyes shone and her mouth opened widely as she turned towards her husband and exclaimed, "Why, Willie, I do believe I see that joke. The Great Steal Combine—did you ever?"

"I guess Wilbur is a bright boy," replied her husband.

They picked up their luggage again and trudged on through the snow while the quiet street echoed with their laughter.

THE MAN WHO SUCCEEDED

THE MAN WHO SUCCEEDED

WHEN Alison Dunbar's last child was born, life and death came very near meeting each other in the grey stone farmhouse on the hill. The woman got on well enough—she was accustomed to having children—and the baby throve too at first, for all that it was so small ; but Dunbar himself was ailing at the time, and if he lived to see his ninth child it was a miracle. Two women of the village watched by his bed all night, and were indeed more careful of him than of Alison in the room above. Dunbar occupied the box-bed in the kitchen : it was warmer for him there, and the old-fashioned theory held good that where there was sickness there must be no air. The "trouble" was on his chest, wherefore the need of excluding air was more than ever imperative. The kitchen windows had hardly been opened since his illness began. A fire of coal and peat burned in the grate, and some children came in with a fearful tread, took a keek at

the sick man, and went out again. The children's bedroom was the loft, as was the fashion of their time and their country. Small though the house was, it received lodgers in summer-time, and the lodgers were all of the poorest class, for the fare was poor at Auchentinnie, and the house was poor too. Dunbar was in debt, and every year brought a new mouth to feed. Logie, the eldest son, sat in the chimney corner and thought about these things. Also he tried to imagine what he would do with his mother and the children if his father should die.

A message came from upstairs that he was to go for the doctor, and he pulled on his hard leather boots which stood by the hearth, and prepared to walk five miles across the hills to Tarbold, where Doctor Mellish lived. He supposed the doctor must be required for his mother, but she had done fine wanting him last time, and the call for help made him anxious.

The night was not dark, and he would be able to see his way by the footpath amongst the heather; but rain was falling, and the moon showed fitfully between dark clouds. He was as much afraid as a boy of sixteen years is who sets forth at midnight alone; but the place was

fuller of fear to him than it might have been to many another, for it was peopled with wraiths and warlocks and other uncanny folk, whom everyone had seen from time to time, and in whose existence everyone believed.

He fetched his cap from a peg, and wrapped a red scarf about his throat. His father was breathing oddly, and there were uneasy movements in the room upstairs. The wind in the kitchen chimney made a strange moaning, and the breathing of the man on the bed was as the wind in the chimney. Outside, heavy drops of rain pattered on the broad leaves of kale in the garden with a noise almost as loud as though they fell on a slate roof. The moon hid herself behind a cloud for a moment, but he could still see the outline of the loose stone dyke round the poor garden, and the little gate leading on to the soaked fields and the moorland beyond. He buttoned up his coat, but lingered at the door for a moment. The light from the uncurtained window upstairs shone upon the wet leaves of a rowan-tree near the house, and against the pane he could see the figures of the two women moving between the bed and the fire. Farther off he could see another light shining inter-

mittently on the rough farm-track with its heavy pools of water, and he wondered where the light came from. It must be from the kitchen window where his father lay, but he had never known the light from the kitchen window shine so far. It shone fitfully, and then seemed to go out. But the light in the kitchen window had not gone out. It was there behind the red geraniums in the window. The light out in the road had moved away again, and now shone upon the moor.

He turned and went upstairs to the loft where the younger children were sleeping, and bent over a rough bed and shook his brother James by the shoulder.

“I’m awa’ for the doctor,” he said, “and you are to come wi’ me.”

“I’ll no come,” said James.

“Ye mon come.”

“Are you feared?” questioned James in a whisper.

“No, I’m no feared, but you’re to come.”

“I’ll no come,” repeated the boy dourly.

Logie crept downstairs, and found his cousin Jeanie waiting for him at the foot of it. “What’s wrang wi’ ye, Logie?” said Jeanie.

“ Sure as deith, Jeanie, I hae seen a corp licht.”

“ Will it be for your father ? ” she said.

“ I dinna ken.”

“ Lucky Home saw it the nicht her daughter died.”

“ I’m awa’ for the doctor,” he repeated.

“ Will ye need to pass it ? ”

“ It’s oot by on the road.”

“ Logie, I’ll gang wi’ ye as far as the gate.”

“ It’s gey and cauld,” he said.

“ I’m no heedin’.”

“ Pit your shawl on.”

She was still in the dress she had worn all day. No one at Auchentinnie that night who was old enough to know anything about life and death had gone to bed and to sleep. The woman upstairs began to moan, and the boy and girl went down the broken pathway to the sagging wooden gate. Once she seized his arm, and he stopped, and said in a whisper, “ Did you see anything ? ” “ No,” she said, “ I saw nothing.” But her eyes had been caught by the glare amongst the moss, and she held her breath for a moment after she had told her lie.

“ Have you a staff, Logie ? ”

He showed her the stick he carried.

“ It’s an awfu’ nicht.”

“ Gang back, Jeanie.”

“ No, I’ll no gang back.”

“ The women will be wanting you, maybe.”

“ Eh, Logie,” said she, “ are we all going to see the morn or no ? ”

A woman’s voice called softly from the house, and Jeanie ran up the path and disappeared into the square of light within the porch ; and then the door closed upon her, and the only patches of brilliancy left were the glistening lights upon the wet leaves of the rowan-tree, and the broken square of lamplight behind the red geraniums in the kitchen.

The gate swung behind him, and Logie went off down the road. He set his eyes and his mind upon a small rift of light over the hills to the West, for it was there between the hills that the road ran. The night was mysterious about him, but he did not know that ; and life and death were mysterious, but he did not know that either. He feared his father was going to die, and he wondered how he would provide for his mother and the children who were left, and he feared the corp-licht more than all beside,

because it was no canny. The light was a message from someone called "they." "They" were telling him that a spirit would pass before the dawn. "They" knew these things which were beyond the ken of men. Many people had seen the light. Old people had been known to say to children and to the young, "It 'ull no tich ye," but all were afraid of it. All might hear thunder roaring and rumbling up the glen, and might see the lightning flash, and be undisturbed by it. But the light that appeared above the pools on the wet moor and danced and flickered down the road made the bravest heart tremble. There were mysterious tappings on windows, too, sometimes ; and once, when the old laird died, the rats that haunted the wainscot marched with the sound of tramping men and left the house. Rats hate death, everyone hates it ; it is a fearsome thing for a body to think of.

Logie had been well brought up. He knew the Bible as it is known in thousands of humble homes in Scotland. But the Bible told him about "appearances" as well as about faith. There was the witch of Endor—who could account for her ? No one could dispute her existence ; she was in the Bible. There were

angels who had come and gone, unearthly visitants, hands that gripped and held, fingers that pointed to as yet undiscovered graves. He had known all these things since he was a boy. There were folk at the glen who had seen the Little People dancing on the green turf in the moonlight. Second sight was common amongst some of the lonely dwellers across the hills. Lucky Home had seen the postman appear to her with a great hole in his head, the night he fell over the edge of the old quarry and smashed his skull. Miss MacLean-up-at-the-Hoose had a vision of three coffins in a row the night that the young laird was drowned in Oban Bay. These were things to talk of in whispers. No one understood them; no one could attempt to explain them. "They" might even resent it if they heard such matters talked of aloud.

The moon came out again from under a scurrying wrack of cloud, and showed the dark outline of the hills and a glimmering of deep water in the hissing loch below. It shone splendidly for a few minutes, revealing the road in front of him—a long desolate track across the moor—and then the night closed in dark about him again,

and he turned for comfort to look back at the grey stone farmhouse in its poor garden, and saw that up in a wee bedroom in the roof someone had placed a tiny lamp.

“That ‘ull be Jeanie,” he said to himself.

The rain began to fall heavily. He felt his way by instinct rather than saw it. Now across his path there flashed a light more vivid than he had yet seen, and he knew he had to pass it on the lonely road. He dug his stick into the ground, and walked on. Once he came near greeting like a bairn through sheer terror. Almost he felt hands about his head, and in the sobbing wind he could hear solitary cries louder than those of the whaup as she calls above the moor, and louder than the piteous bleating of lambs who are lost far up on the hillside, louder than the cries of the weans who call for mither when they wake and are feared in the howe o’ the nicht.

The experiences of the Scottish peasantry are few. They live mostly on thoughts, and the practical world of facts, which scatters dreaming, hardly touches them. The minds of these men and women are younger than their years, except when fancy and imagination hold sway. In these

they are far beyond the average man. The Lowlander can hold his own in argument—he reasons ; but the Highlander knows.

Had the boy been of another faith he would have crossed himself. Logie plodded with even steps across the moor and up into the bosom of the hills. His heart was like melting wax within him, and his eyes were fixed upon the road. He buttoned his jacket tighter as the rain fell in copious showers.

Once, far away, he thought he heard a dog barking. He wished he had brought the collie with him. But dogs see more than men do ; more than once he had had the collie come whimpering up to his heel when he himself saw nothing.

The wind dropped when he got into the shelter of the hills, and the rain, which heretofore had fallen steadily, resolved itself into a thick mist. There was a smur of rain like a fog over everything, and in it he stumbled on, still sure of his way, but beset by a horrible feeling of calamity.

There had been few expressions of affection between Dunbar and his children. Even now Logie was not saying that he loved his father, but merely that he meant to get the doctor in

time for him. He must get to Doctor Mellish tramping steadily, till he reached Tarbold and knocked at his door. The doctor was a man of skill ; but "they" knew better than the doctor. Well, at least his father would not pass out of this world alone. He had a feeling, shared by many with him in the glen, that the doctor goes halfway down the long valley with the soul that wears awa'.

The mist increased, and there was no wind at all. There were no voices now nor clutching hands ; the silence was heavy and pressed in close, as darkness presses the ribs of those who wander in it. He could almost have asked for the crying voices now in the stupefying fog that surrounded him. Not a yard of pathway was visible before his face, but he found his way, as no doubt dogs find it, without consulting the stars. He trudged on in his stiff leather boots.

It was in a mist like this that the postman had lost his road, and fallen into the empty quarry. Logie was not afraid of missing the way, but he was horribly afraid of those who might take the message of his death to his mother in her dreams.

Only once again did a light dance in front of him. He knew by a power apart from reasoning

that it was to the farm the message came—to the farm where something waited for his father.

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He reached the doctor's house between midnight and the small lonely hour that follows upon it. He knocked at the door, and told his message, and the doctor's housekeeper bade him come ben and dry himself, and never questioned him about his walk, for she could see by his face that he was feared beyond telling. But she got him a cup of coffee, and he sat by the fire and drank it, and felt a grateful warmth steal through him, and a blessed courage flow into him with the drinking of the steaming coffee and milk.

He was to drive back in the gig with Doctor Mellish. The doctor had said to him, "You have come a far cry, Logie; I'll give you a lift back," and nothing more. Had he laid his hand on the boy's heart he might have wondered at its beating.

The road home was three miles longer than the track across the hills. The doctor lighted his own gig-lamps, and harnessed a white horse between the shafts, while the housekeeper took

down his Inverness cape from a peg in the passage, and laid it and his hat upon the table.

"Is it your father?" she said to Logie, who still sat by the fire.

"I'm no verra sure," he replied.

"It's no maw?" she asked anxiously.

"I ken it's baith," he answered.

There was no further explanation between them, but Elizabeth went out into the yard to warn the doctor.

It was for Alison's sake rather than for Dunbar's that he sent his horse so quickly forward. A man thinks of a woman in illness, and a woman thinks of a man. He went to the upstairs room first, knowing all was not well, but before he reached the door Dunbar called to him.

"Aye, aye, I am coming," said the doctor.

"It's death, I tell ye—come on," said the man in the kitchen.

The doctor turned back in the narrow stairway, and went to the kitchen, where he found him breathing his last breath.

That was a night of grief and doul in the farmhouse, and upstairs the doctor was telling a woman to keep up a brave heart and live for the sake of her children, and the two women about

the bed were saying to her that there would be blithe-meat in the morning. For so it is in Scotland when a baby is born: there is a meagre feast in the mother's room, and neighbours come and eat and drink a little. It is a welcome to the newcomer, and they call this first feast "blithe-meat" in the Highlands.

Logie wanted to see his mother when he found that she was through her trouble, but Jeanie was fussy and important. She had been of some help during the night, and meant to keep mankind out of the room. But he crept in when he could, and sat beside his mother's bed, and heard her crying, and found no words to comfort her, being short of words, as at all times he was. She said to him that he must be father to her fatherless babe, and more a son than ever to herself.

When she had finished speaking he found his voice at last, and said, "It's an awfu' little ane this time, maw."

She roused herself at this, and turned almost fiercely upon him. "The bairn's fine," she said.

But it sickened, and died before many days were over, and then there followed a long grey winter in the farmhouse, when the snow lay

about the door, and there was but little bread in the cupboard and no meat for growing children. But the place was clean and the Bible was a comfort.

In two years, and after a long struggle, the farm had to be given up, and Jeanie, who cooked for the family, and washed for them and tended the younger children, and sent them off to school in such clothes as only she and her mother knew the providing of, swept them into a smaller cottage one day, and cleaned and redd up that too, and then came to the grim-faced master of it, the boy of eighteen who wore always a frown upon his forehead and counted farthings as other men count gold, and said to him :

“ It 'ull no do, Logie.”

“ What 'ull no do ? ”

“ Your wages canna keep us.”

He was earning wages then, a matter of fifteen shillings a week, as a joiner. The boy next him in age was delicate, and could bring in very little.

She twitted him with his unsuccess because her heart was so sore, and he bore it without a word because speech always came unreadily to him.

"I wadna stay and see your mother starve."

He drew his black brows together over his eyes, and looked mutely at her. She often cleared the ground with a few sharp words when she had something important to say.

"If you were getting three pounds a week in Canada you might be sending home something."

He turned the matter over in his mind slowly, spoke to Doctor Mellish about it, who promised to make inquiries.

The minister said he ought not to leave his mother; but Canada had got in with its insistent call before the minister spoke. She drowns other voices. There comes a fine morning when a boy says to himself, "I'm for the West!" and then there's no holding him. Logie had one pound a week to look forward to in Scotland until the time when he would be thirty, perhaps, and then he might earn a few more shillings and would have a wife and children to keep.

He was not alone in his departure. The world of to-day was outward bound. Doctor Mellish advanced him his passage money, and wished he were going too. Some men from Tarbold with

a bit of siller in their pockets were leaving also. The emigration boat was full of men, all hopeful till the sea-sickness came on ! They lay about on the decks, heedless of anything but their own sufferings. The women lay like corpses. The doctor came round with a bottle of brandy once and dosed them all, and that put a bit of heart into them, and they swore not so roundly that they were going back to England and would never leave it again. At the end of two days they were dancing on the decks, and some one had a concertina, and some one else beat on an old tray to give rhythm to the music, and food was eaten almost by the bucketful after the fast which had prevailed. Hope came back again. In the evenings they sang songs, and the men laughed at the discomforts of the trip, feeling strong ; and the women with their babies and their chattels looked Westward with set faces, and never dreamed of giving in. But it was an untried world in front of them, and who knows what sorrows—who knows what joys ?

Work was what the men wanted, and they got plenty of it. Logie was tapped on the shoulder as soon as he reached the wharf, and offered a post in some ironworks near Montreal. An

agent was down looking for men, and he collected fifty of them, of all nations upon the earth, and made them sign contracts and give their names. And he lost them all but twelve between the ship and the ironworks, and of these eleven were Italians and one was Logie Dunbar ; the rest had been tempted away by higher wages offered by other agents, and never dreamed of sticking to their contracts. Some of them stayed at the docks and worked there. There was a ship unloading a cargo of onions, and a gang of men were wheeling up little boxes of them, two or three perhaps at a time, on small hand-barrows. All the men moved slowly ; none of them shoved a weight heavier than a child could have managed. They were old hands, most of them, and meant to do as little as they possibly could for a day's wage. That ship's cargo was going to cost a considerable sum to unload.

Logie remarked to an Irish constable who stood on the wharf, "They are no going to hurry themsel's."

"These men," said the Irish constable, "belong to a union which won't allow them to carry a man's burden or walk at a man's pace. They

are going to make a success of Canada. You can see they mean to get on."

Logie's hands were itching to take hold of the handles of the barrows and "hurl" them and their ridiculous little burdens up the wharf. But his train was starting, and he showed his indentures and his papers to an emigration officer and got into the train with some scores of other men, most of them bewildered, some of them rather cheeky. All of them were kindly dealt with: there were free breakfasts for everyone down at the sheds, and the men with families were offered facilities for giving the women and children a rest before faring forth, while the single men left more quickly on their journey.

The morning was brilliantly clear and bright, and the blue sky might have been apparent to some of the emigrants had they not been intent upon guarding their bundles and boxes. It seemed almost as though the more miserable were the possessions the greater care was taken of them. A bundle of rubbish sewed into an old hop-sack was believed by an elderly woman-emigrant to be coveted by everyone who passed it.

The foreigners had the worst of it, and were piteous in their attempts to make themselves understood, while being helped on every side with offers of words which they did not want. Their gesticulations became frenzied. In the babel of it all Logie lost his sense of individuality. The very way in which nothing was left to him to decide bewildered him. He felt that he was being taken in hand and did not know how to resent it, but when he submitted to it he did so with mental reservations. He was keeping his eyes open, and all the time he was thinking he could have managed all this much better than he saw it done, and at a future day he meant to point out to some one the right way to do it. In the meantime he submitted to being bossed, because in the near future he meant to boss somebody.

He couldn't do it in the ironworks, because he occupied a very subordinate position there; but he submitted to that too because of the pay which was offered him, and because he knew he was in a good firm. He liked being connected with people of a Scottish name, with a Scottish foreman at the head of things. Some of the men in the works took but small interest in their job.

They were, like the wharfmen who unloaded the onions, determined to do as little as they could and for the highest wages they might procure. In the evenings, when the day's work was over, they drank when they could afford to do so, or looked at moving pictures ; and when they had no money they stood at street corners with their hands in their pockets and spat upon the pavement. They were generous when they had dollars to spend, and hospitable in the matter of offering drinks. Logie refused their hospitality, and earned a bad name for so doing ; but drink fuddled his head, and he did not mean to be fuddled. He had one or two rows about it, but he thought, on the whole, even that was better than being fuddled, though, no doubt, he refused with more surliness than he need have shown. He was not popular in the ironworks, and when the chance came of better wages he left without regret, and was surprised that the foreman asked him to stay on, and furthermore gave him an excellent character. "Come back when you want anything to do," he said ; "we never refuse a Scotchman."

He wanted more money, and said so, and the foreman told him where he could get it. There

was a lot of railway building going on. Big loans were being floated in England, and where there was so much money about some part of it might fall to anyone's share.

"Go where there is money," said the foreman.

"If I had capital I could do better than some of them," said Logie.

"What's capital?" said the man.

"Money," he answered laconically.

"Man, have you got ten dollars?" said the foreman.

"Aye," said Logie, feeling in his pockets.

"That's capital," said the foreman. "Invest it."

He went hungry, and invested his ten dollars in a bit of land not much bigger than a chicken-run, which the owner had often tried to barter for a bottle of whisky. He meant to have land, and to have Canadian land, and he starved systematically in a country where appetites are keen in order to buy it; and when he had established sufficient credit he borrowed money and invested that too in the same way. Meanwhile his wages were rising. He sent home postal orders, and went without new clothes.

He did without everything that it is possible for a man to do without, and learned the one

tremendous lesson which nearly every man who succeeds has got to learn at the outset—he learned to do without.

The particular knack required for doing without has to be learned long before the knack of acquiring. Also it is an infinitely harder lesson. Acquisition is comparatively easy.

Logie was learning to do without friends ; he was learning to do without food, except that which is common and which supports life for the greatest number of hours on the smallest expenditure of coin ; he wore clothes as nearly as possible in rags, and he lived a life of solitude because he believed that to be in the company of others meant spending money. He did not mean to spend money, and he did not intend anyone to know what he was having for dinner. He grew broad-shouldered on his coarse fare, and the trick of frowning remained with him, so that his two black eyebrows almost joined together above his eyes. He was an ugly fellow although well-built, and he looked on at life dourly, and always knew that he could do things much better than they were done by those about him.

The inefficiency of the men's work filled him

with a sense of irritation. In Canada men of many nationalities were doing sloppy, unworthy work, and seemed to be perfectly satisfied with it. He wondered at the want of anything like co-operation in employment—not the co-operation of profit-sharing, but the co-operation of the men who want work well done and of the men who mean to do it well. Always there seemed to him to be a tug between those who demanded high wages and frequently did their work indifferently, and those who gave wages reluctantly and who knew they were being badly served. Wage-earning under these circumstances seemed to him to be a mistake. He counted his money one day, and went and bought a pile of wood, unsawn, which he had seen for sale, and he carried it on a hand-cart because he had no team, and dumped it down in his chicken-yard, which no one before had ever wanted and which no one was ever likely to want, and he began to saw it into lengths and then to hawk it on his hand-cart round the town. His net takings on the first day amounted to two dollars—but that in summer weather. Folk would want more fuel when the winter came. He spent one dollar and kept the other.

For the first time he began to feel a free man, and to be inordinately proud of himself without exactly knowing why. He bought more wood, and piled it with care and exactitude on his own bit of land—his own land, which he might use as he liked, and where he could sit around on some of his logs and feel as if he possessed the earth, and was in a position where no man could touch him.

The next day he sold no wood at all. He allowed himself a pipe of tobacco that night, because he believed a man does not do much good work when he is downhearted, and he thought a pipe would cheer him. He knocked the ashes carefully out when he had finished, and determined to go on with his wood-buying and his wood-selling. The nights being light, he was able to work late, and he pitied from the bottom of his heart the men who had to knock off work at a certain given hour.

During the days of long light weather he thought, with a curl of the lip, of those who limited themselves to eight hours' work a day. His pile of sawn wood grew high, and he began to have some regular customers for it. They were Scotspeople most of them, and where there

was a Highland servant he was always certain of an order. Once he wrote on a piece of paper, for sheer love of seeing the sentence in ink, "I am a landowner." His yard began to have a prosperous appearance, and he had to climb for logs, they were piled so high. But he did not begin to alter his way of living, even when he began to make dollars more rapidly. He had learned to do without, and he intended to go on doing without for a long time to come. It began to have a charm of its own for him, as it has for all those who are healthy in mind and body. He bought meal, cooked his own porridge, and established his work and his food on a ratio scale: so much food enabled him to do so much work, so much sleep enabled him to remain so many hours awake. He became like a balance set between two weights, and to keep the balance true he kept himself in health. He never thought about pleasure: his upbringing had made him independent of it. His happiness consisted in making money, and whatever he saved he invested in land. He dreamed of land, and always he was the possessor of it. He dreamed of banks and finance, and always he was the owner of the bank—such stuff was he

made of—or he was the controller of finance. In his dreaming he never held a subordinate position anywhere. He was always at the top of things, always getting on. With the development of a new railway his ridiculous patch of territory was wanted for a building site. He sold it for a couple of hundred dollars, and bought another piece of ground farther out of the town. His daily tramp was longer from there, but, on the other hand, houses were springing up on all sides ; winter was coming on, and everyone wanted wood to burn. There were houses which gave him orders regularly. He learned where to buy lumber to advantage, and he sent for one of his brothers to come out and join him. One of his own brothers was the only man he could trust in the business.

Rob brought news from home—news that was parted with at intervals, and was asked for with difficulty. The two brothers never spoke when they were at work, but over their tea at night they uttered brief sentences which might pass for conversation.

They became “Dunbar Brothers,” with their name painted on a cart, with a horse to take the wood from door to door. Their stable was

primitively built amongst the piles of wood, and the house where Dunbar Brothers lived was almost as plain and unadorned as the stable. There was a little enamel ware on a shelf, an enamel saucepan and a kettle, a table and one or two chairs, and in the room above there were two mattresses spread on home-made wooden bedsteads.

Once Logie wrote in white letters on a board, "Repairs Done," and nailed it to the wooden side of his house. When Rob came home in the evening he looked at the board for a long time, his thumbs stuck into the armholes of his waistcoat and his feet set wide apart.

In the evening he said, "You're advertising?" Logie smiled and said, "Yon's a fac'."

They often looked at the board, glorying in it, and they began to mend and patch broken tables and chairs through the winter evenings. All the time they were wondering why people didn't do their mending for themselves. A bit of glue or a hammer and some nails were generally all that were required to mend the chair. Yet few troubled to stretch out a hand for a tool as in the old days; everything was sent out to be mended, and no price seemed too high to ask for the simplest sort of work.

A third brother came out from Scotland, and a third mattress was provided for him, also another mug was bought, and the firm began to make chairs as well as to mend them. Rob had had no training as a carpenter, but the other two had passed their apprenticeship, and Rob had a shrewd business head. It was he who thought of having their delicate brother out as a designer. The boy had always had a faculty beyond common for drawing, and the business was growing. They wanted as a designer a man who would wear black clothes all day, and come into the front shop and serve customers, with a pencil behind his ear. The delicate, refined-looking boy, with his pale face, was the man for the post. He was given a bed in the office, where the stove was, because he was weakly. He was the one who wrote letters home. Alison Dunbar began at last to have a better comprehension of Canadian life than she had ever been able to acquire from Logie's weekly scrape of the pen. She learned, too, that in dry air the delicate son of the family was able to breathe. He continued to act as office clerk and designer, but he could have sawn wood with the best before many months were over. He told her it was "all

Canada," and she thought her sons had gone daft about the place. They wanted one of their sisters to cook for them before another year was out. But she married before she had been many months making the house comfortable and cooking barley broth and scones as they have been made in the Western Highlands these many generations. Knowing the loss that she would be to them, she said to Logie, as jauntily as the subject requires, " You'll need to get a wife for yoursel', Logie."

" I have no time the noo," he answered.

He was building a shack on a bit of land of his own, and that was his first piece of house property. When he sold it he sent his mother home twenty pounds.

After that it was " Dunbar Brothers, Builders and Contractors." The office had glass doors to it, and great ledgers on a desk with a sloping top, and a telephone which rang repeatedly. The brothers, all except James, worked in their shirt sleeves still, although they had a dozen men in their employ: they drove home nails while James made out contracts. It began to be said of them that what Dunbar Brothers undertook to do, they always did: they could even finish

a job at the time stated. The broken promises which hamper trade and cause telephone bells to ring excitedly were not for them. They seldom made promises.

The joy of gain was upon them all. The joy of this new land was the plenteousness of it. To make money did not imply taking it: it implied filling your mouth, and giving a bite to a friend. There was gloriously enough! Above all there was enough land, and the firm of Dunbar never dreamed of investing its money in anything but land and the business.

The comforts of life did not increase with their prosperity. Mrs. Dunbar had written to say that her three remaining children were too young to go abroad or to be of very much use when they arrived.

“It’s a pity we haven’t Jeanie,” said Rob.

Simultaneously the brothers turned their eyes upon Logie, who drew his black brows together and said nothing.

He was building a little house, but had not sold it before it was finished, as his custom was.

He believed he would go home and fetch her from Scotland when the house was finished and the verandah had been furnished with cane

chairs, and the bedrooms with iron bedsteads, and the kitchen with pots and pans. In the end Jeanie came out to him to be married. She belonged to working people, and knew that work had to come first. When Logie saw her standing on the deck of the ship, dressed in decent black, and with a homely shawl about her shoulders, everything in the world slipped from him, and the empty space that was left behind was filled to overflowing with one woman. She came forward down the gangway, and they kissed each other and clasped hands, and said very little, and walked still handfasted to the Presbyterian minister's house, and were married ; and each, according to the custom of a country which has produced very fine women and very good wives, promised to be faithful and dutiful to the other—and that was all.

The year after Jeanie's arrival in Canada was the year that things took a crooked turn with the firm of "Dunbar Brothers." Business went down in the unaccountable way it does sometimes, but the "back-put," as they called it, would be only temporary. But one night something very serious happened, for the yard, which was now known as "the premises," was burned

to the ground. No one knew how the accident happened ; in its result it was terrible enough. Jeanie saw the wrecked and charred remains of the business the morning after the accident happened, and said, " It's a Providence no one was killed." She turned her house into a temporary dwelling for all and sundry, and cooked for them all and made up beds, and allowed Logie to know for the first time that she had never thought the " premises " half good enough.

" You were losing business," she said, " because you didna look as though you expected it."

" You're the woman ! " said Logie.

" It's no honesty that counts, it's plate-glass," she said.

" We'll need to be honest," said Logie.

" Nae fears," quoth she.

But they were going to have plate-glass windows as well, and a " frontage," and " Dunbar Brothers, Builders and Cabinet Makers, &c.," over the door.

" For the town is bound to come this way," said Jeanie ; and she mended and darned for the men, and kept her house sweet from garret to cellar, and washed and cooked till the very day her boy was born.

When she came downstairs again, the business had not increased. The town "jumped" in the other direction from where lay Logie's land. There was a dark bit of road ahead—yes, and a rough bit too—and Jeanie Dunbar set her face to it not doggedly, perhaps, so much as primly. She merely refused to have a bowing acquaintance with misfortune, and declined to know it. Of finance she knew as much as any of the four men about her. She belonged to a country where it has never been the fashion to reckon women as a class separate and apart from the men, because in Scotland the pretty fashion of being silly has never been popularised. Women hear business discussed, they know the value of trade, and most of them have competent business heads. When Logie would have sold his land, being pretty nearly sick with despair now, his wife bade him stick to it; and she knew what getting in on the ground-floor meant, and had a notion where railway shops were likely to be erected. She knew the value of a good proposition, and she put her finger unerringly on the flaws in a bad one. Rob brought all the business to her, and she discussed it with him over her baking-board.

"If Logie sinks so much capital in that, there

will not be much money to spend," he would say to her.

"Who's talking of spending money, Rob Dunbar?" said she. "Was I brought up to spend money or to take care of it?" She made a dollar go twice as far as they had been able to make it in the old days of their discomfort, because a man when he does without a thing does without it. But a woman, who cannot bear to see him doing without, uses her sixth sense to give him what he wants without increasing his expenditure. The thing has been done hundreds of times, and there is not a man living who knows how it is done. They believe a woman has no head for figures, and yet they are quite unable to contradict the statement (which she frequently makes) that two and two are five—a statement, too, which she is proving to be true every day of her life.

"Go on with your building, Logie," she said to him, "and hold your head up."

She was one of those women who can put up clean white muslin curtains in the window, and starve comfortably behind them.

But the present reverse in her husband's for-

tune tried him much more severely than his former poverty had done.

“If I can’t pay for the lumber I can’t take the contracts. Money is tight now, and no one is going to wait for payment. The land must go, even if we sell it at a loss.”

“You don’t come to Canada to lose money,” was his wife’s argument.

“The men have to be paid.”

“Will you be able to pay them this week?”

“Yes,” he said.

“And next week?”

“Not unless I get the money for the new house, and that isn’t due till the contract is finished. The snow is keeping us back.”

“Give the snow another week to melt,” she said.

But the snow did not melt, and Rob arranged for a loan at the bank. The firm of Dunbar continued putting up their new sheds and workshops with a frontage on the street. The premises were twice the size of the old ones which had been burned down, and the price of them lay in Logie’s lands, from which the town had turned away like a horse that shies from something that he alone has seen. No one can tell

the vagaries of a town : no sooner has a cluster of houses been formed than it begins to have a personality and a will of its own. The suburb in which Logie had invested all he possessed was not booming with the rest of the town. If the land was sold at its present depreciated value, it might mean for the firm of Dunbar beginning the world all over again, and to their credit be it said that they were all ready thus to begin. It is the air, perhaps, of Canada that makes hopefulness its natural quality. But debt is a serious antidote to hopefulness, and Dunbar Brothers were in debt. Logie would have changed his present life of anxiety for the old days of semi-starvation in his little woodyard, and Rob told Jeanie that the value of Logie's lands had fallen again.

She clasped young Logie to her heart, and told him that she wasn't going to be beaten, and she went to a man whom everyone knows in Montreal, and to whom most people who are in trouble go, and she told him no tale of woe, but simply made a bare statement of a difficult financial crisis.

"We arranged it for her," the man whom everyone knows in Montreal once said after-

wards, when he was accused of having helped a despairing man, and probably that is the only time he ever spoke of the matter.

He was paid back, of course, or else this story need never have been written, or, at any rate, the title would have had to be changed. He was paid back because contracts began to come in again. But the land which Logie owned was still low in value; no one wanted it, no one seemed to feel inclined to build upon it, and it was costing something in the way of rates.

"It will never be the fashion," Logie said one day, "and we may just as well get rid of it. The town is stretching in every direction except this, and I saw some new roads graded in the south suburb yesterday."

Jeanie remained silent. She never spoke till her husband had finished, and he always knew when he got no reply from her that something was coming.

"I might get a few hundred dollars for it now," he said.

Then Jeanie began to speak rapidly, distinctly, but without any heat and without raising her voice.

"Yes, Logie," she said, "your land is not the

fashion, and the big houses are all going the other way. But what hinders ye to make it the fashion? Wha would be beaten by a bit of land! Man, I would twist its thrawn neck, and make it walk in some other direction if it wouldn't walk in mine, but it shouldn't lie still and rot. The land is good and the sun is upon it, and a man with a pair of hands is waiting to see it made the fashion!"

He waited to hear all she had to say, and he built houses on the land himself, and his brothers built them with him as in the good old days. He called the circle of them "Dunbar Park," and he ran up the rents of them so high that everyone wanted to have a house there, and he sailed into fortune with a minute or two to spare as he rounded the last flag.

That was some years afterwards, of course—houses, even in Canada, are not built and lived in in a day—but the thing happened long before Logie's youngest child was three years old.

As I knew Dunbar Park, it was an unexpected little piece of civilisation following upon a ragged piece of town. The ragged piece of town has since then been covered with municipal buildings, and shops with façades, and "structures"

with round-faced clocks upon them high up in the towers, crowned with weather-vanes. But during my first visit there it was owned by one called Naboth, who is the holder of all vineyards which someone else wants, and Logie meant to have it, and already had a vision of a tramway line running between Dunbar Park and the town. Jeanie grudged the price he paid for it, but laughs now at the mere mention of so small a sum. A single corner lot on that ragged piece of ground is worth more to-day than the sum her husband paid for the whole of it. Already the tramway line is a glorious reality. Business men take it at nine in the morning, and get back to supper shortly after six. Dunbar Park is planted with little trees that are even now nearly the size of well-grown walking-sticks. There are rows of houses, each of a different design, in gardens with no flowers in them. Sometimes taxi-cabs drive up to the doors, but there is only one motor car, and that belongs to the big house set on a little eminence above the others. It is looked at with respect and awe by all the lesser inhabitants of the place. One or two people always stand and look at it when it is drawn up before the handsome portico.

To-day I saw a lady descend the steps, dressed in handsome furs; some children were with her, and a servant tucked them up carefully under buffalo robes. She gave some order to the chauffeur with a supremely well-bred accent. I am told that all the little houses with their white-painted porches in Dunbar Park belong to her husband, and will one day belong to her children. People, hearing that the houses have again gone up in value, often say to each other, "What will those young Dunbars be worth some day?" They consider Mrs. Dunbar "grand," but they admit that she has every reason to be so. Her house is filled with modern inlaid furniture, the carpets are of velvet pile, and the lace curtains in the windows are from England, while Mrs. Dunbar's clothes come from Paris.

She has never disappointed Logan Dunbar (they are just becoming known as the Logan-Dunbars), and she does not disappoint him now. She is a fine lady, and Logie glories in the fact. Oh, the refinement of her accent! And her good manners! And her easy way of sitting at the head of her dinner-table, with the flowers and the silver upon it! It is great to see her.

She wears her sealskin jacket like a queen, and talks about the servant problem in Canada. It is great to hear her. Once, she found a Scottish baronet from whom she was descended, and she stuck to him, and had his crest stamped upon her notepaper. Logie always left the Scottish baronet to her, although she claimed him as a common ancestor. She was the only woman in Dunbar Park who had afternoon tea—and she knew how it ought to be served too! There was not much that anyone could teach her. When she gave dinner-parties they were awe-inspiring. The silver shone, the glass was bright, and Mrs. Logan-Dunbar, standing by a standard electric lamp and gliding forward to meet her guests, was a very finished performer. Logie wore evening dress. He had his first suit of them when he was over thirty years of age. Some day he means to have silk socks. Jeanie finds it difficult to wear stockings of any other material. She has a few volumes bound in calf of works of great authors lying on her table; last winter she "took up" Bergson. It is a secret which she keeps even from Logie that the governess writes all her notes for her, because, try as she may, spelling is still a difficulty. Sometimes she

calls the governess, who is devoted to her, her secretary.

An introduction to Dunbar House is eagerly sought for by English visitors, who believe that an introduction to Mr. Logan-Dunbar will make the fortune of backward sons, and they admire Mrs. Dunbar's well-kept house and charming bedrooms. Of herself they are ever so little a bit afraid. Jeanie encourages the feeling; her manner has grown just noticeably distant: she is one of the old Dunbars of Lilleburne, and an ancient descent of that sort does undoubtedly stamp itself on many generations. When English visitors leave, they are punctilious in the matter of sending letters of thanks at once to the big house on the hill. They say to their boys, "Just look what can be done in Canada!" And the boys do not do it.

Mrs. Logan-Dunbar has calls to pay and shopping to do; her motor car is always busy. She buys a few exquisite flowers, and leaves them as a little offering upon an English Duchess who is staying at the hotel, but who is coming to spend a few days at Dunbar House in order to see what life in the West is really like; and the English Duchess, who is at that very moment going

to get into a taxi-cab, accepts the invitation to be driven in the glittering Rolls-Royce car. She admires the children, chats delightfully, and lets fall some slang sometimes, and is not nearly so splendid as Jeanie Dunbar with her furs about her, sitting back regally on the buffalo robes. Afternoon tea will be ready now, punctual, well served, and with an accompaniment of pretty silver and little cakes.

Is it any wonder that Logie is proud of his wife !

The Duchess, who has often stayed, as a girl, at the laird's house in Auchentinnie, and who knows all about the Dunbars, says to herself, as she drives away in Jeanie's motor car, that she wonders if any but Scotspeople could have done it ! (But then, of course, she is a Scotswoman herself.) She would have enjoyed Jeanie more, perhaps, sitting, as she often sat, with the villagers, over a peat-fire in some low-roofed little room in the Highlands. But even the Duchess thinks it a fine performance, and she loves Jeanie all the better for playing the game so well.

There was a dinner-party that night at Dunbar House, and do you think that Jeanie Dunbar

was going to let the servants enjoy all the fun of it, and not have a hand in every single thing herself? She adjusted the last candle-shade at six o'clock, shook up a cushion, and glanced at an entrée in aspic, and then Logie came home, and he and she went upstairs to a large room at the top of the house. It is a room filled with flowers, and in the daytime all the sunshine that comes into Dunbar Park floods it. The carpet is soft, and the curtains are warm and bright, and in a bed with pretty hangings lies an old woman with a white mutch over her grey hair. She is not quite bed-ridden yet, and during the sunny hours of the day she is up for an hour or two, and sees her grandchildren and their mother. But six o'clock finds her in bed again under the smooth white sheets, and six o'clock is her own hour which no one disputes with her, and nothing ever comes to disturb it. Business itself may wait between the hours of six and seven, and important guests are left to themselves while the old woman sits up in bed, with her wrinkled hands idle, and her old face with a smile of welcome on it turned towards the door. In the morning it is perhaps only a kiss and good-bye, but in the evening Logie never hurries,

never cuts the hour short by so much as five minutes. He and his wife sit on either side of the bed, each with a wrinkled hand between their own strong ones, and then the news of the day is given and advice is asked—all the best advice in Dunbar House comes from the big room at the top of it. It is shrewd advice too, and none the worse for that.

Before the hour is ended Alison produces an old leather-covered Bible from under the sheets. It always goes to bed with her at six o'clock, and always with a certain solemn shyness it is produced towards the end of the hour. They are reading from the Book of Leviticus now, and Alison could not sleep quietly or peacefully without a chapter of it being read to her.

When the chapter is finished, Logie bends over the bed and kisses his mother.

“I’ll need to be awa noo,” he says, “for we hae a gran’ pairty the nicht.”

“Jeanie let me see the jeelies,” says Alison, “and the braw wee cakes.”

“Mither was sayin’ the cakes was no big enough, but I’m tellin’ her that the folks hae eneuch to eat afore they come to dessairt and the wee cakes.”

“It’s just a wee something to taste their gabs,” explains Logie.

They are always Scottish peasants again between the hours of six and seven, and always they speak the speech of the North. Who knows,—perhaps Alison would have understood no other, and the people of the Highlands are proverbially courteous.

“I hae seen her dress,” Alison goes on. “I had it laid out on the sofy a’ the afternoon, lookin’ at it.”

“Aye, and mither stitched a wee frill into it for a’ that her fingers are stiff,” said Jeanie. “I wasna goin’ doon to the parlour wi’ ma shouthers a’ bare.”

“Aye, she’d get cauld,” said Logie, but nevertheless he had a man’s admiration for a low-necked evening gown.

“I am goin’ to keep my door a wee thing open and listen to ye’s talkin’ doonstairs,” said the old woman in bed, her eyes brightening.

“Aye, we’ll talk,” said Logie, smiling, “we’ll talk even when we hae naething to say. That’s queer, mither, isn’t it noo ? ”

“Aye, but you’ll need to be in the fashion, Logie.”

"We are in the fashion," he assented contentedly, and gave Jeanie a look which seemed to lift her.

"They 'ull be gettin' tea, I sepad?"

"Hoot, mither, I showed ye the wee coffeecups."

"It's aye coffee noo," explained Logie.

"I hope it 'ull no keep them from sleeping."

"It's awfy indegestible," said Jeanie, "and lies kin' o' heavy when you're no used to it."

"Do ye ken, a never tasted it," said Alison.

"It was aye tea at hame."

"Aye, it was tea, mither, when it wasna burnt crusts wi' het water poured ower them, and you tellin' the bairns it was tea."

A bell rang downstairs to proclaim the hour of dressing for dinner (there was to be a gong soon).

"Ye maun gang, ye maun gang," said Alison eagerly, "and a' they gran' folk coming."

They kissed her and went downstairs, and Alison lay back on her pillows, and wished that Donald and the bairn could have lived to see this day. And Jeanie, in her braw goon wi' a tail to it, stood under the electric light in the much-inlaid drawing-room, and received her guests with smiles of welcome and greeted them in her most perfect English accent.

THE MAN WHO FAILED

THE MAN WHO FAILED

THE railway lines ran opposite the hotel, with a road and a snowstorm between it and them. In the window of the hotel sat four men and smoked, with spittoons beside them. They rested their feet on the ledge of the window, which might be said to open on the street had it ever been opened, and they looked impassively at the snow and at the railway lines. Few persons passed, and those who did pass failed to provoke any interest in the faces of the men who sat in the window.

The interior of the room contained a bar and a telephone, and a boy who swept up. He had a flat hair-broom with a long handle, and it seemed to be a satisfaction to him to rise occasionally and sweep the dust under a radiator. There were four radiators in the room, which was heated to seventy-five degrees. The men who sat in the window wore overcoats and hats, and did not remove them throughout the day.

It was a holiday in Esplanade City, and they were spending it in watching the snow and keeping warm. No doubt the effect of contrast in sensation produces a sense of pleasure in the human mind.

A fifth man came into the hotel and kicked the snow off his feet, and went to the bar and asked for a drink. Being served with it, he asked for another, and he then went and sat on a chair beside one of the radiators. The boy with the broom stared at him for a time, and the landlord of the inn, having been roused from slumber in a parlour at the back of the house, used his waking moments to speak on the telephone. He used it constantly, and he used it dramatically. As a comedian acting in a dumb show, he would have convinced any audience of the reality of his performance. He cuddled the counter upon which the telephone stood, settling himself as comfortably as he could against its unyielding wooden sides and veined waxcloth top. He placed his elbows fatly and with an absurd sense of ease upon the high counter, and took up the telephone receiver with something of the smiling air of anticipation with which a man accosts a friend.

“Are you there, are you there? Hullo! Are you there?”

Having found the recipient of the message, which was always a confidential one, the difficulty seemed to him to be heard by the man at the other end and not by the men in the room. In order to accomplish this, the landlord made his right hand into a sort of pad round the mouth of the instrument, and into this improvised or extended mouthpiece he talked for hours.

In pantomime he received every message that came, and at intervals he kicked his heels with laughter; he winked also, and sent smiles down the telephone. His joviality took the form of saying “Gee” and “Gee wug” at intervals—the friend to whom he spoke was evidently a comic character.

The men in the window never turned their heads, nor did their expressions alter. The man who had had two glasses of whisky went to sleep on his Canadian wooden chair, until the nodding of his head awoke him, and he flung his arm over the back of his uneasy resting-place and laid his head heavily upon it. He was a very thin man, upon whose sparsely covered bones the hard back of the chair might well make a

mark. When he woke up he had another glass of whisky.

As the afternoon wore on the silently falling snow fell more heavily, and the road was nearly white now, but it melted as soon as it touched the black railway lines beyond. Once a train roared into the station with a great rollicking bell clang on its engine, throwing back its head and showing its brazen tongue and toothless lips, and swinging between uprights with a certain grim jollity in the midst of the dancing snow. Out of the overheated train came a handful of passengers, all carrying luggage in their hands. Most of them walked past the window of the hotel, and two of them entered and asked for accommodation.

The landlord left the telephone, and went behind the counter with a business-like air. He offered one traveller a fifth bed in a room where already four men slept, and suggested jocosely that the second traveller might sleep on the soft side of a plank.

The traveller went out into the snow again, and a current of cold air and a few snowflakes came in as he went.

The man by the radiator shivered, and com-

plained of the cold. He had a dollar left in his pocket, and was wondering whether he would have supper or more glasses of whisky. He laid his head down on his arm again, and went to sleep. The boy with the broom swept up the snowflakes by the door, and went back to his chair, and the landlord stood behind the counter and waited for further inspiration for telephone messages.

The sky was so full of snow to-day that darkness came early in the afternoon, and the landlord pulled down a little chain from an enormous electric-light burner that hung from the ceiling, and turned on a glare of dazzling light. The sleeping man turned in his chair, and drew his hat down over his eyes. He was unshaved and dirtier than the other men, but his face was infinitely more refined than theirs and infinitely more weak. When supper-time came he took out his dollar again, and went to the counter and asked for a glass of whisky.

A boy entered selling local newspapers. Almost every town in Canada has a local newspaper, which is always eagerly bought and read by the inhabitants. The price of it was high, and each man in the room bought a copy of it. The boy

handed them their change smartly and went out again, and the stir and incident of selling and buying were over. The men refilled their pipes, recrossed their legs, and began to read their newspapers. They wanted to know who had won various matches, and they got that information, and with it many advertisements of patent medicines, and some tales of houses accidentally burned and children dying in the flames.

The landlord smelled a good smell of cooking, and retired to the kitchen premises. The men in the window made a few remarks to each other about dollars, and the man who had been asleep turned over his newspaper impatiently and said, "What twaddle it all is!" Sometimes he thought of taking up newspaper work himself again. Lately he had thought of going into a lumber camp. Only yesterday he had an idea of going to Vancouver. It was warmer in Vancouver, and money was easily made there. He had heard of a man who had bought a piece of land for five hundred dollars, and had sold it for five thousand dollars. That was the luck some fellows had: they made money without any trouble. It was all luck. He knew of another fellow, an Englishman, who landed in

Canada with ten pounds in his pocket, and who in a few years had become one of the greatest millionaires in the Dominion. Some fellows had all the luck.

Esplanade City was not the place in which to make money ; he could see that the moment he entered it. In spite of all he had heard about a possible boom, he didn't believe a boom was coming. Canada itself was a rotten country ; there would be a fearful slump some day, and then he would like to know what was going to become of all the land for which such a high price had been paid. Just wait a little, and the slump would come, as it had come in Australia, in Argentina, and in Canada itself once before. Just wait, and then some of those millionaires would know what poverty meant.

The landlord began to walk about briskly in a passage between the dining-room and the kitchen, with a dinner-napkin over his shoulder, and the newspaper boy came in again and found that everyone was supplied with a newspaper, and went out. The four men in the window rose almost simultaneously and shook themselves, hung up their hats and coats, and went in to supper. The stranger who had been refused a

bed came in also to supper, and told his companion that he had got a shakedown a little higher up in the town at a saloon. He also hung up his hat and coat, dusted some snow from his trousers, and slipped off a pair of galoshes he was wearing, and went into the dining-room.

The fifth man was left alone in the room. The boy with the long-handled broom had gone to help wait at table. There was a pleasant odour of dinner coming from the dining-room, and one or two smoking dishes had been carried down the passage in full view of the bare rotunda where the man sat. It was too cold to sleep out, or he would have had some dinner and slept in a railway shed. He thought he would walk over to the dépôt now, and see what chances there were of being allowed to rest in the waiting-room. The waiting-room was heated like a furnace, and he enjoyed the warmth until questioned as to whether or not he was a *bonâ fide* traveller. He went out into the snow again and found a quick-lunch counter just outside the dépôt, where for a few cents he got something to eat as he stood. There was not a chair in the place. He groped his way back to the hotel,

for the snow was falling still and the night had closed in dark.

The other men were not out from supper yet, and he fell to reading his newspaper again in the still empty room.

He had himself once written far better articles than those rotten, ill-printed newspapers contained, but he held the page with its foggy print up to the electric light again and read it through. He read the advertisements of those who wanted men to work for them, and in imagination he answered them all. He would have liked to write to some of the advertisers to-night, but he couldn't bring himself to do it. He couldn't sit down and write a letter—to-morrow, perhaps, not to-night. He couldn't answer letters at night; besides, he hadn't quite made up his mind which advertisement to answer. He believed, after all, it would be better to go to Vancouver, where fortunes were so easily made. There is probably some necessity in the human mind that makes men move Westward. Let him get to the other coast, and all would be well. He might even go to Victoria. Victoria seemed to be booming, and the climate was good there. He thought he would offer himself at some news-

paper office, or, suppose a theatre was building, he believed he could get a post as an actor. Acting, he thought, suited him as well as anything—or journalism. He could show heaps of newspaper cuttings—written in very good English, too!—the work of his own brain and the outcome of his scholarly attainments.

He took some from his pocket now, and looked them over, and felt that he was actually doing business. The articles were clever: they were mainly intended to show how Mr. Carnegie ought to spend his money, and they began for the most part by saying that if Mr. Carnegie would divert his benevolence from public libraries into such useful channels as might provide a fund for assisting those who write journals instead of those who read them, he would be doing less harm than by adding to the rates and encouraging pauperism. He was always down upon Mr. Carnegie, and was unsparing in his blame of misdirected charity.

When he had finished reading his articles he put them away, wondering how he had ever been able to do anything so brilliant, and persuaded that he must take up journalism again some day—only, of course, in this country no one appreci-

ated good journalism. There was a thing of his on the Balkan situation which prophesied the outbreak of war accurately. He thought he would touch it up and modernise it a little, and offer it to the editor of the local rag. If there had been pen and ink handy he would have begun on his article now, but there was no pen and ink, so he went to bed. There were two other beds in the room where he slept; one was occupied by a 'Varsity man, who sat up and read *Punch* by the light of a single candle, and the other by a bricklayer, who went to bed in his clothes. The 'Varsity man at intervals gave short yelps of delight over the jokes he was reading; the bricklayer grumbled aloud whether any one listened to him or not. The Fifth Man found both of them get on his nerves, and wished he had a room to himself. When he no longer could stand the grumbling of the bricklayer he said to him, "There's not a brick building in the whole of Esplanade City: how can you expect to get work here?"

"I beant going to change my trade for no one," the bricklayer, who was a Sussex man, said. "Man and boy, I have been a bricklayer all my days, and my father before me. There

be brick cottages and houses put up by Breets, same name as me, before I was born, and there be Breets, bricklayers, lying snug in the old churchyard—rows of 'em."

"Well, you can't lay bricks where there are no bricks to lay," said the Fifth Man.

"I beant going to change my trade," said the bricklayer.

The man who was reading *Punch* put it down, and said he was a Sussex man himself.

"Be you, sir? Well, 'tis a better place than Canady." The two talked about agricultural depression till the candle went out, and then the three men slept till morning.

The Fifth Man felt better when he woke up, and he found his stylographic pen, and made some erasures and some marginal notes to one of his newspaper articles, and when he had had breakfast he went to the editorial office, which was also a house agency and had a printing press in it. There a man was setting up type, and there for a few dollars he sold his articles, and was invited to bring some more.

He went back to the hotel, and tried to think of something to write about. The weather was clearer to-day, and he believed his mind ought

to have been clearer too. He sat in the rotunda all day, keeping warm and ruffling up his hair, and wished he could think of something to write about ; and then, because Byron had written many of his best verses with the assistance of gin and water, he drank several glasses of whisky and wrote some doggerel rhymes about Canada. "It's sure to go down with them," he reflected, and wished they only knew how he detested the Maple Leaf. If the weather had been warmer he would have gone for a walk ; and he did go once or twice to the window, and looked out, but the sight of the snow under foot made him shiver, and when he saw the 'Varsity man driving a team of horses past the window he shivered and crept nearer to the radiator. He thought how little scope there was for talent in a new country like this, and how difficult it was to persuade men that brains were more than muscles. "They think of nothing but sawing wood and heaving muck," he said to himself with disdain.

He wrote a little article on the theme, tipped it with gall and flavoured it with spleen, and sent it to an American magazine, because he knew there would be no chance of its acceptance here, where men must have praise for their country.

At night he slept badly, because the bricklayer snored and the 'Varsity man had opened the window a little. His bed was uncomfortable, and he dreamed unpleasantly when at last he slept, and woke unrefreshed.

It was no wonder he couldn't write; a man could have no powers for imagination who slept as badly as he did. He walked as far as the drug-store, and got the man there to "make him up something." The next day he tinkered up some old articles again, and sold them as before. He believed that the men round about him might themselves furnish him with material for character study, but he couldn't see the thing properly—couldn't get outside of it, as it were, and view it from an artistic or journalistic standpoint. The men were not really interesting. They seldom spoke, and those who came and went about the bar never talked of anything but dollars. There had been a heavy fall of snow, and the traffic had all but stopped. When paths had been cut through the drifts a few pedestrians got about, but walking was difficult except in the prescribed and narrow confines of the little town. The bricklayer had not been to bed for two nights, and the 'Varsity man, excusing himself for inter-

fering in the matter on the grounds that he also was a Sussex man, went out and looked for him, and found him lying ill with pneumonia on a mattress laid on the floor in a lodging-house.

So there was no more team-driving for the 'Varsity man for many days to come, but, with a certain air of authority which he had, he approached emigration officials and others, and that is why the bricklayer found himself in a Sussex village again a few weeks later, and never left it, and never means to leave it, as long as he lives.

The Fifth Man, when he had sold all his old stories and articles, took the train to Vancouver, and hired himself out as cook and odd-job man. His master knew that he was getting one of the wrong sort; but wages for the right sort were far too high for him to attempt, so he took what he could get, as he had done many times before, and asked no questions, but was determined to keep his eye upon the man. He fed him well, but refused to give him sherry to put in the soup. He was very busy, and his wife was dead, and he must have someone to cook for him and his boys.

When the Fifth Man was sober he could cook

well, also he helped the boys with their school tasks ; so his master, being grateful, set about to reform him the night when no dinner appeared and his servant was assisted home. He suggested the Gold Cure, and offered money to help pay for it, and also he attempted, with encouraging words of exactly the right sort, to make out a picture of what a man might become with the opportunities that Canada afforded.

There were tears that morning—silly tears, more piteous than a child sheds, and the Fifth Man said, “ I ought to marry some nice girl ; it is the only thing to save me.”

“ It might be the making of you,” said his master.

But he himself was unable to put up for very long with the cook’s vagaries, and he kicked him out of the house one night, and the man returned the next morning and received his wages, and thought he would try Victoria.

He did not like the idea of undertaking menial work again, and, funds being low, he conceived the happy idea of going to a clergyman and asking for assistance. Clergymen were mostly fools, he reckoned ; and, having a plausible tongue and withal a knowledge of music, he obtained con-

siderable monetary assistance, and subsequently the promise of a salary as player of the harmonium in a small church. He gave music lessons, and bought back a watch which he had pawned. He also bought back some self-respect. He alluded to his past indiscretions as "having had very bad health for some years." His hand often shook badly, and the difficulty of his life was to be punctual. Punctuality was more than a bugbear, it was almost a terror to him. The difficulty of stating any definite time, the immense amount of effort required to say "I will be there," terrified him. He never gave a direct answer. He never knew whether he could come or not, but alluded frequently to his engagement book, which he offered to consult, and would then send a reply. With his engagement book in front of him he would sit for hours wondering whether he would go here or there. Decision was a hideous thing to have to contemplate, and it was like an evil beast always lying in wait for him. How could he say what he was doing next Thursday? He did not know. When night came he always had several notes weighing heavily on his mind, and he would decide to ring people up on the telephone and send

answers to them in that way in the morning. Then he would go to bed exhausted. He hated the people who asked him to decide things ; when they wanted an answer at once he replied querulously, and generally changed his mind shortly after a direct answer had been forced from him. He was always altering his plans, and failing to keep his engagements. To ladies and to himself he explained his shortcomings by saying that it was due to his artistic temperament. They believed him.

Men's patience was shorter with him. The clergyman said that, of course, it was impossible to continue to employ him, because the church services were always now unpunctual, and he refused to accept the statement about the irregularity of the organist's watch more than three times in succession.

He lost his post, and with that he lost heart too. The only time he was moderately happy was when he was moderately drunk. He often thought when evening came, and he was able to enjoy himself undisturbed, that whatever people liked to say in dispraise of intoxicants, the comfort that had been got from them more than compensated for all that could be said against them.

It was when they failed to comfort him that he blenched before something awful and horrible in front of him. He did not know what it was. He imagined some people called it the Pit, and he could not be surprised at the name. He knew that whatever was coming was inevitable. He hoped he would die, but he had an idea that he would have to go through the Pit first.

The clergyman came, and spoke to him very seriously about the way he was behaving. Man to man he wrestled with him for the space of one good afternoon, until tears came again, and the broken creature laid his arms upon the table and his head in them, and when he lifted it again his face was wet.

“It isn’t too late,” the clergyman said, “it isn’t too late.”

“I believe it was always in my family,” the wretched man said.

“But, even so, it can be overcome if you would only set your mind to it. Have you no will left?” he said.

“No, I have no will left,” said the man, raising dim eyes with the tears still in them and putting his shaking hands together.

His reply gave the clergyman something to

preach about the following Sunday, and he spoke of free-will and no-will very eloquently. Meanwhile to the man himself he continued his arguments and persuasions, and in the end seemed to have won his way and to have put new hope into him.

“It’s only a good woman can save me,” said the miserable man at last.

The clergyman agreed that it was wonderful what a good woman could do.

“I’ll turn over a new leaf and get married,” the feeble, suffering tone went on.

They both thought it might do wonders for him, and the clergyman said, “There is no higher incentive to good in a man’s life than a good woman.”

When men have been pushed out to the Pacific Coast, following the Westward tendency of all nomadic men towards the place where the sun sinks, they seldom turn back, but nearly always stay where they are, and “settle down,” as they call it. No doubt the matter can be explained physiologically. The Fifth Man is still at Vancouver. Sometimes he spends a month in hospital, sometimes he writes articles; once he was in jail. More often he lives at home, doing as

little as possible and subsisting on odd jobs. Somehow or other he keeps a roof over his head, no one quite knows how, and somehow or other he is generally able to afford money for a drink. His periods of abstinence are becoming shorter and less frequent than they used to be, and his health is not good, neither is his appearance attractive. The nice girl whom he married is very pretty, and she had probably never seen a drunkard until she married the Fifth Man.

EMPIRE MAKERS

EMPIRE MAKERS

~~readily and~~
HESTER LORING was at the wistful age when women ask themselves why they have not married. The question, even when self-put, has something of shock in it. Hester made it without complaint. Marriage had ever seemed to her the inevitable consummation of a woman's life—perhaps its most suitable expression. But she had wedded her conviction to a modest apathy which counted that a husband would happen as other things in the realm of Providence happen. She had believed it hardly maidenly to anticipate his arrival by so much as a thought. Nevertheless, many of the dates in her future had been fixed by it, and, without specialising on any particular person, she had collected a few trifles for the home which would one day be hers, and had even dated in her thoughts the time when she would have children.

Hester had never had a chance of marrying. She had never even been disappointed in love. Probably she had simply lacked opportunity, but

the incompleteness in her life, if it had been felt, had never been sufficiently pronounced to produce more than a gentle regret. Her position as an unmarried woman had been accepted with a dignity which imparted to spinsterhood a certain distinction. She was not without interests in the world, and not without cares, and thereby she escaped the envy of harassed matrons who might have felt impatience at her more easy single life. Most people knew that Miss Loring must have plenty to do, and everyone knew her to be contented. They had seen her grow a little old and faded amongst them without questioning, and the fact that her place had, for many years past, been by a sick-bed, or close to the wheel of a slowly moving bath-chair, seemed to have a certain suitability of its own. The necessity for joy evidently did not belong to Miss Loring: amusements would have hardly suited her. She was a good woman—her reward would probably be in Heaven.

Doubtless her father's illness had aged her too soon. Many other women might have borne their years more bravely: Hester had submitted to them, as she had submitted to all else in her life, with a certain grace. She did not attempt to

conceal the number of her years ; old age would come just as her father's illness had come, not with shock of disaster, but as an attendant circumstance on life. To both she yielded with a dignity of obedience which became her.

Now that her father was dead she found that she was worse than poor ; she found that she was getting elderly.

In worldly matters she was not badly off, for the Vicarage furniture was hers, and a small annual income as well ; so that when Annie's invitation came it was not the expense of the adventure, but its size, which appalled her.

The friendship had begun when the farmer's little daughter had been allowed to come to tea at the Vicarage on Saturday afternoons to play with Hester, who had no mother ; and it had lasted through a devoted childhood. When the girls were about eighteen years old, Cambridge Local Examinations had come to stir the quiet village with a sense of something intellectual and great, and Annie had passed them with distinction, leaving Miss Loring far behind. It was during this period, and when they studied together, that they became Hester and Annie to each other for the first time. The humbler-born girl, with the

fuller measure of freedom which belongs to her class, attained to the thrilling life of London as a well-paid typist, and the Vicarage walls closed once more round the clergyman's daughter. Mr. Loring's memory began to fail him. He became very dependent on Hester. She told him who the different parishioners were, and found their names when he sought for them unsuccessfully in his own mind, and she always wrote out the church- notices for him for the services on Sunday. He still preached well, and the village wanted no other pastor than the one to whom they had grown accustomed. They knew all he had to say, and liked hearing it. His sermons were considered fine, and they lost nothing by being repeated. No one interfered with him, and he interfered with no one. His silvery-white hair under his soft felt hat hung over the collar of his coat and gave him a patriarchal—almost a prophetic—air, and his influence in the parish was infinitely greater than that of the active curate, who did most of the work. The curate would no doubt be vicar of the parish one day, but he was a good fellow, and had no desire to oust the frail invalid from his long-held place. He worked loyally, wrote frequently to the girl he

was engaged to, and in course of time composed an excellent obituary notice in the local paper for the late Mr. Loring, who for over forty years had been the esteemed Vicar of the parish of Mawer-St.-Mary.

The curate received the promotion he deserved, and Miss Loring, with a few grey hairs and a slightly stooping figure, handed the keys of the Vicarage over to him; paid for dilapidations in the nicest possible way with no unpleasantness; and waited to see the repairs to the chancel begun, and hot and cold water introduced upstairs in her old home, before taking her ticket for Canada.

Annie was settled in Canada now. She begged her friend to come and pay her a visit: "The voyage itself will do you good," she wrote, "and will help to make you forget all you have been through." Annie was the one person who ever seemed to think that Miss Loring ought to enjoy herself. Yet even she had hardly thought that Hester would have the spirit to say "yes" to her invitation. Duty so long had had the dominion over her that it seemed impossible to believe that there was no restraining force to withhold her, as it always had done, from doing what she desired. Duty had determined for her even the fashion of

wearing her hair, and it had never been imitated by the Friendly Girls, for whose good example it was confined in smooth braids. She was always neatly shod, and in the evening she used to wear black, with pretty moonstone ornaments which reflected her eyes. Probably there was no circumstance which could have discovered a flaw in her manners, and none that she would have failed to accept unquestioningly — more especially if that circumstance should be sad. Sadness seemed to her inevitable. There had been a good many tragedies in the village since she had lived there.

She came blinking out of the gloom of the old Vicarage, and went to Canada.

Annie wrote exultingly of the place. No one was sad there, no one was poor, no one was out of work. "It's the hopefulness of it all," she wrote, "that is so amazing. Everyone is optimistic here (Annie had learned Canada's favourite word); I don't think anybody knows how to be resigned! They just go forward, and put things right which were wrong."

She had written a glowing account of her house to Hester when first she had settled in Canada, but the colours of the picture were toned down

ever so little now that she heard that Miss Loring was really coming and would see it all. It became "quite a little place and, of course, not quite what Miss Loring was accustomed to"; but it certainly was snug and comfortable. There was a spare bedroom, which was hers for as long as she would stay—but of course it must be remembered that everything was quite plain and simple, and the life out there was not like life in England.

Even the toned-down picture was attractive. And Donald never required anything taken from the original portrait of him. The colours of that portrait even deepened a little as the time drew near for the much-wished-for introduction between her husband and her friend. He was everything to her: where he was was her home and he denied her nothing that he could afford to give her. Living was expensive of course, but Donald had an excellent salary as a dépôt agent—Hester must forgive her for the Canadian phrases she had got into the way of using; dépôt agent meant the same thing as station-master at home. The position, however, was quite different—Hester would find Democracy very puzzling at first.

Hester wrote back an affectionate letter, saying that all she wanted was to see Annie again, and

suggesting in very loving terms that nothing else mattered. "It's been very lonely for some time," she wrote, "for of course my dear father's mental condition made my relations with him more like that of nurse and child: and I have missed you sadly, Annie."

So the letters continued full of pleasant anticipations, until Miss Loring set sail from muddy Liverpool on a wet day, and arrived to wonder at blue skies and to hear prophecies of what the maple leaf would look like presently. She had not told herself what she expected to find in Canada, and her impressions were as fresh as those of a child. There was always something of the child about her—a well-behaved child, to whom enjoyment had suddenly presented itself as an unknown and wonderful thing. On the voyage she found herself popular, and almost trembled when she admitted, "People seem to like me." She exchanged addresses with many friends before disembarking at Quebec. Her naïve wonder had appealed to many who themselves had wandered far, and her good manners were always attractive. Few persons had heard of the place whither she was bound, although there were some who had a faint cognisance that Macredie was out West on

the C.P.R. line. "I think there's a station," someone said vaguely, and Hester was able to say, "Yes, I know there's a station."

It was a very small station—"but a very nice one," she said to herself, and then to Annie, who met her on the platform. She turned to look about her, and wondered why the train had stopped just because there was one small group of houses huddled together close to the line, with a few others scattered about on the still unbroken prairie. She wanted to know everything, and asked what trade there was that made the train delay itself at so small a place.

"Wheat, wheat, and nothing but wheat!" Annie cried. "Haven't you seen the grain elevator, Hester?" and she pointed to the most conspicuous thing in the landscape, a tall building with a roof, in shape like those that children make on a house of cards—a building which looked active even on the outside, and which had, moreover, a prosperous air about it. There was a store near the station and a quick-lunch-room, put up evidently with the intention of deceiving people into thinking that Macredie was a place of commerce and bustle.

Donald appeared soon, and had evidently re-

mained hidden until the two friends should have finished their first greetings, and perhaps shed those few natural tears which women shed when death has intervened to sober happier recollections.

“I’ll take your grip,” he said.

Hester thought Annie had not said too much in praise of him. The Scottish-Canadian station-master was a man of such fine features, with a face of so much intelligence and goodness, that it was not out of place to claim for him unusual personal attractions. His hair was whitening a little although he was young, and this made his deep blue eyes look almost gentian-coloured. His fresh complexion was of the sort which is more common in the west of Scotland than elsewhere, and in the dark clothing of his profession he appeared a very personable man. Hester wanted to be alone with his wife almost immediately in order to be able to say all the amiable things that she thought of him. But Donald was with them, carrying her hand-luggage up to the little house where they lived.

“You must remember it isn’t Mawer-St.-Mary’s Vicarage,” said Annie in her joyous excited way, and, recalling the house with its handsome furni-

ture, she added, "We get nothing like the Vicarage out here."

"Well, but, Annie, this has a charm of its own," Hester said, looking at the cottage-like building with its simple verandah and the little paling enclosing what was no more than a yard, and what was affectionately called the garden.

Everything was delightful; it was good to be with Annie again, and she had found time to whisper to her, "He's very handsome!" and to receive Annie's delighted reply, "Oh, you will like him, Hester! There are very few like Donald."

The guest was charmed with everything; she was one of those gentle, unexacting women to whom it is a pleasure to minister. She recognised Annie's handiwork everywhere, and even remembered a picture which she had brought out from home.

"It's all quite simple," repeated the delighted hostess. "I only hope you won't be dull."

"I am sure you are not dull, Annie," Miss Loring said with that air of affectionate congratulation which is outgiving in its quality and sometimes escapes reward.

"But of course I am very busy," Annie said; "besides—"

There followed some delightful confidences and some kisses between the two women.

In the evening there was the pleasure of making Donald's further acquaintance. He was a quiet man, whom people learned to know more by being with him than actually hearing him speak. But he was good company, for all his quiet ways, and the hour after supper was pleasantly spent, and made an early bed-time unwelcome.

Hester lay long awake. She kept her light burning, and gazed about her in the little room, saying to herself, "I am in Canada: I am with Annie." It was too wonderful. England already looked misty and far away. Why had she lived there so long? It was, of course, on her father's account—her dear father, who had demanded so much of her, and who had lived to be so old and feeble and so sadly afflicted in his mind. She had only done her duty to him as a daughter should. Had she married, escape would have been possible. But marriage had been the only legitimate way of escape, and Providence had not sent her a husband. She thought how happy Annie seemed with Donald. Quite early in the morning she heard, through the thin deal partitions of the house, their voices talking to each

other, and once or twice Annie's laugh. It was like hearing birds chirp in their nests in the early morning. Donald got up, and made her a cup of tea presently on a little oil stove in the kitchen. She could hear him walking about softly so as not to disturb anyone, and once more she thought what a good fellow he was. She said to herself, "I have missed some things."

The days passed very pleasantly; she "did" her own bedroom in the morning and helped with the housework, and in the afternoons she and Annie would sit on the verandah and make clothes for Annie's baby. The baby was "quite a secret" as yet, but it was just as well to get forward with everything. Later, the Spenses were going to a new house, right away out on the prairie—many miles from a station. It was one of those sites which were going to become valuable when the C.P.R. extended its branch line there. Gabriel Leach had recommended the place. Gabriel knew a good deal about the C.P.R., and he had some land which would be worth a fabulous price some day. The C.P.R. would have their junction there when the branch line was begun, and a city would spring up where

before there were only rolling prairies. It would all be wrought by the power of the Railway. The Railway is the miracle-worker of Canada.

Gabriel came to supper a few days later. He was a lean man, with a dusty-coloured face and dusty-coloured hair and pale eyes under tawny eyebrows. He wore a blue shirt, and drove his own waggon into the station, where he left some goods in the freight shed before coming on to see the dépôt agent and his wife. He unhitched his team and watered them, and then asked Donald if he might have a wash.

“You know, men do everything in this country,” Annie said to her guest. “I mean hardly anyone has servants. But Mr. Leach is a rich man—or he will be very rich some day; his property is likely to go up enormously in value when the C.P.R. comes.”

“The C.P.R. is a sort of Providence here,” said Hester.

“Well, it has given us Canada, you know,” Annie said.

They talked to Gabriel about it, and asked him when the new line was going to be begun.

“Not till the spring anyway,” he said.

Nothing ever happened in Canada till the spring.

"You will learn that, Hester, when you have been out here a while," cried Annie; "it puzzled me very much at first—why everything should be put off till the spring. Wait till you see our snows!"

"It used to snow pretty badly at Mawer-St.-Mary," said the English lady.

"Just wait," said Annie again, and laughed.

At supper they told stories to each other, mostly reminiscent, and all with the Old Country as a background. Gabriel Leach had never been there.

"I don't think I ever heard where he came from," Donald said in the late evening while they still chatted, reluctant to go to bed even after Leach's waggon had rolled away. "Gabriel is a quiet man. His wife was a quiet woman. Folks get like that on the prairies."

"*We shan't!*" said Annie, looking at Donald, and knowing the wonderful secret between them.

"We'll have enough to keep us cheery," Donald said.

"Is his wife dead?" Hester asked.

She was told "yes"; she had died just before the harvest.

"I thought he seemed sad," said Hester.

“He never said much,” Donald told her.

There was the clang of a bell outside, and Donald went out to attend to his duties on the railway line which has given Canada to England.

“Mr. Leach ought to marry again,” Annie said.

Afterwards, when the dusty-faced man came often to the house, she had half a mind to say a playful word to Hester about his visits; but it was difficult to think of her in connection with a love affair, and she might not like to be teased about it.

“Tell me more about his wife,” Hester said one evening. She had never heard anything about the dead woman from their neighbours except that she had died just before harvest. A very awkward time for a woman to die, they thought, and it seemed that it had not added to her popularity in life to quit it at a time so inopportune.

“It was hard on Leach losing his wife just before harvest—”

Even Donald said it.

“She couldn’t help it,” said Miss Loring.

“No; but she was always a queer one, and of course it was hard on a man being left just when hired labour had to be cooked for, and a woman was most wanted about the place.”

"Not that she made him particularly comfortable at any time, I believe," said Donald. "I was only once at their house, and I couldn't say much for her as a housewife."

"Poor man," said Miss Loring. Perhaps she, too, began to think that to die before harvest was not very tactful on the part of a woman.

"He ought to make another venture," said Donald slyly — Donald had, of course, not been brought up all his life to venerate Miss Loring.

His wife gave him a look, but both decided afterwards that Hester had noticed nothing.

Once, shortly afterwards, she began to talk to Annie about her age, saying, "You are still a young woman, while I am old, although there is so little difference in our ages."

"You are not old," said Annie loyally, and, indeed, Miss Loring seemed to have grown younger. Her hair had lost its silver threads. "It was all that nursing," said Annie. "Why, Hester, you are a young woman still."

One evening, when from some vanity she put on an evening dress — black, with the moonstone ornaments — the young couple, who watched her, laughed to themselves.

"She is looking sweet," said Annie. "You should have seen her as a girl; she was lovely."

"There's something very lady-like about her," the husband replied. "I wonder if she would ever think of marrying Leach."

Hester took no one into her confidence. When she became engaged to Gabriel, she told the news quite simply, and waited to hear what her friends thought of it. Annie could only thank all the Fates that move in these matters that she and her friend were going to be neighbours—not near neighbours of course; nothing was near in Canada, as it was in England (oh, how small everything would look when they got back!), but near, as prairie farms go.

The Spenses' new house would only be twenty short miles from Gabriel's farm. In summer-time they could drive over and see each other. Neither of them need ever fear the solitude of the prairies or the loneliness of which some people had spoken.—And when the C.P.R. came along—!

Gabriel wanted the marriage to be at once, and those who knew all the circumstances of the case agreed with him. He had lost his first wife

before harvest, and it was only fair that he should have a new one before harvest began again.

Hester was willing that it should be so. She must learn cooking, she said, and Annie must help her in a thousand ways. She looked forward to her marriage, and wrote home to tell the people of Mawer-St.-Mary about it. Later she would have her own furniture packed and sent out to Canada—her books and her piano. She would make the farm very home-like and comfortable. Never should Gabriel have a neglected home again: perhaps he would forget his sad life and the silent woman who had shared it with him. He himself would learn to talk more. Talking was a matter of habit.

“I have no doubts,” she said to Annie, who had invited her confidence.

“I am sure it is the happiest state,” said Annie.

Neither of them said that the chief happiness of marriage would depend on having children; but both had the same thought.

“I like to see them toddling to the gate in their little checked pinafores, even if it’s only to see the train coming,” Donald said. “There’s a nice little girl of Fletcher’s brings a post-bag to

the station in the mornings, and I do believe it does one good to see her."

He was a clean-hearted man—one to whom the simple joys of life appealed strongly. He could hardly have believed that anyone was sincere who did not enjoy a good supper, and love children, and grieve over deaths and rejoice over marriages. He asked a guard, who was a friend of his, to bring him up a bundle of flags to decorate the porch of his house for the wedding. Annie made a little feast, and the Presbyterian minister came up from Kippin and read the marriage-service in the sitting-room of the Spenses' house. Someone even lent a white satin slipper for the occasion, and tied it to a wheel of Leach's waggon when it started on its long journey across the prairie.

Gabriel drove her himself, and smoked as he drove. At the back of the little waggon was strapped Hester's luggage.

After they had travelled some miles he said to her, "This will all be town-lots some day."

"I like it better as it is," she answered; "all the time we've been driving I have been watching the shadows of the clouds on the waving wheat,

and thinking how beautiful it is. In England, you know, we only see little bits of things at a time: even a sunset may only look like the end of a village street."

"You'll see plenty of sunsets here, but I don't know that I ever took any particular notice of them."

All round them the prairie lay like a quiet sea under the sun. The wind among the wheat rustled it softly together. Did it but blow a little harder, almost one might have believed that the bell-like grain would tinkle. On every side the horizon was bounded by blue sky which seemed to fit down closely on the waving grain. Save for some gentle undulations in the ground it was all one level sweep. The sky seemed immanent: one gazed into the blue depth of it whichever way one looked.

"I think I can understand what poets mean," she said, "when they say that they draw inspiration by merely looking upwards into the sky. At home one hardly knows what it means; the clouds are low, and in our towns the smoke hangs heavily. But here one seems to know almost what the infinite means, and what is meant by very far away."

"I don't know that I ever saw a poet," said Gabriel.

"When my books come out from England, we will read much together," she thought, and would have spoken the suggestion aloud had it not been that something in Gabriel's face prevented it. She must know him better before suggesting that they should read poetry together.

"We don't often see a newspaper out here," he said.

That was one of the things she must put right; she must have newspapers sent to them from England, and magazines and books. Her own small fortune would enable her to pay for these things, and it was part of her scheme for her home that all the small luxuries of it should be provided by herself.

"We don't get much time for reading," he said, "except in the winter-time, and then the snow makes the rooms pretty dark."

"I am longing to see the first fall of snow," said her voice beside him.

A long silence fell between them before Gabriel pointed with his whip and said, "That's the house." She had said to herself many times that she would not submit to silence. It was one of the things from which her husband was to be delivered. But the silence conquered her: she

was unable to break it. Each remark that she thought of seemed too trivial for the immensities of the voiceless prairie and the quiet man beside her.

Annie had told her that tears were unlucky at a wedding—besides, what was there to cry about? . . . “That’s the house,” said Gabriel, and she strove to tell him all that her home would mean to her and him; but the prairie took the words before they were uttered, and swallowed them up.

Gabriel got down off the seat actively, as became his long, thin figure, and he took a big door-key from his pocket and began to fumble with the latch. There was a little porch to the house, with black wire-netting nailed over it, and a tiny raised verandah. All the woodwork of the house was unpainted, and it had been bleached white with the sun. The prairie grass came up to the very door: there was no path visible except between two out-buildings, one of which appeared to be a stable, and the other a little lodge. Between them were scattered untidy piles of old iron and the like, a waggon-wheel long since out of use, and one or two rusty coils of wire-fencing.

“I will have it all put in order,” Hester

thought; "some day I will even get flowers to grow." She got down on the off-side of the waggon and followed her husband into their house.

There was a stopped clock on the chimney-piece above the stove, a table of bleached wood, like that of which the house was built, some half-dozen wooden chairs, and a little varnished cupboard which looked as if it had been bought second-hand. The room appeared to be a general sitting-room, and three smaller rooms opened off it. One was a kitchen, the other a bedroom, and the third room was empty. She entered the bedroom, and Gabriel brought her dressing-case there. Half mechanically she drew from it her pretty tortoiseshell brushes and the little knick-knacks of her toilet table. Then, as there was no linen cover visible, she fetched a clean rough towel which hung on a rail, spread it out, and laid the brushes on it. A looking-glass hung from a nail on the wall; there were some woman's shoes underneath the table, and in a cupboard hung two or three woman's dresses.

Gabriel watched her with interest and a little curiosity as she unpacked, and then went outside and fetched some wood and lighted a fire in the

stove. Hester found her voice and began to ask questions—"Where would she find this or that?" They must have tea together—it was to be as homelike as possible.

"I reckon I'll have to get the hired man to help me with your box," Leach said, and together he and a foreigner with long hair went and took the trunk from the waggon and brought it indoors.

Hester found it easier to ask the hired man rather than her husband where were the sheets for the beds, and where the table-cloths.

He said in a lisping, foreign way that he didn't know, and then reckoned that Mrs. Leach never had any linen as far as he knew on bed or board—there were plenty of blankets in the chest.

"After all, we are pioneers," Hester thought, "and I will get it all right in time." She found some more rough towels and made what shift with them she could, and from her trunk she drew forth one of the aprons which Annie had given her and set to work to dust and to lay tea. She found her husband looking curiously at her again as she worked, and once he said to her, "I'll get you fixed when the C.P.R. comes."

She knew he liked to talk about it, and together they imagined the day when rows of shops and

streets and houses might stand where this house now stood.

"I'll be able to sell it in town-lots before even the roads are graded," he said, "and if the town jumps this way—well! In Winnipeg they're getting a thousand dollars a foot for a frontage on Portage Avenue."

"We shall be too rich!" said Hester. "What will you do with the money, Gabriel?"

"I'll buy more land," he said.

Everyone bought land; most people did a turnover. They bought and sold rapidly, and when prices rose they quoted the fortunes which they might have made if they had held on. It would have seemed like a scandalous waste of capital to buy anything else but land.

"This house may be a corner lot some day," he said, "with a steam tram running in front of it."

"Perhaps I shall love it too well by then to want to have it touched," she said.

"Nothing pays like land," he answered.

Hester wished that she lived nearer Annie, and could ask her many things. Had Annie known, she would certainly have lent her house-linen and all sorts of little comforts. She unpacked, and

thought how incongruous the contents of her box looked in the bare little house. The tortoiseshell brushes looked almost jewel-like on the humble table ; her pretty portfolio and writing things, her dresses and neat shoes, had an absurd air of detachment about them. Once she had seen a picture of a Christmas pantomime fairy—a thing all tinsel and silver and gold—in a humble garret, and she thought the fairy had a less incongruous look than the silver trifles and boxes on rough wooden shelves. She spread a little table with devotional books, and placed a candle, which Gabriel found for her, in a metal candle-stick. After he had gone out she washed the tea-things and tidied up the hearth, and in the evening she lighted a lamp and placed it between them, and spoke to him of her old life at home and of her father and of the villagers. It was essential that she should talk of her old home to-night. She wanted Gabriel to know her from the very beginning of her life, and to love her from some far-away time. She had never told anyone of her inmost thoughts, but she wanted to tell them to her husband, and it puzzled her almost to the point of tears to know why she could not speak to him. Perhaps it was the

silence. The silence of the prairie crept in at the window and wrapped them round and came between them. In a passionate resentment of its presence she talked deliberately of Mawer-St.-Mary and of the people who lived there, almost in the form of a recital which required nothing but the ear of the other to help her. Speaking more rapidly than was her wont, she tried to give little sketches of village life. Dim forms began to people the room as she called them up, and gave her a comforting sense of companionship. The penetrating silence of the prairie was vanquished. Her husband's rare speeches and the almost unbroken quiet of the house would be dissipated some day by her. Some day she would learn to know him better, and he would require no other companion than herself to people the bare room. They would have much in common with each other, and Gabriel would learn to love his evenings with her. Presently there would be no long silences between them. To-night she must not mind if things felt a little strange.

Harvest-time followed quickly after Hester's marriage, and with harvest the arrival of extra hands. The uncarpeted boards of the room echoed with the unwonted sound of feet. Break-

fasts for hungry men had to be prepared, dinners for hungry men, suppers for hungry men. There were always hungry men to cook for and dishes to wash up, and there was but little leisure for thinking or for doing anything else than work. She saw the black threshing-machine standing like a little toy on the prairie, and watched its long funnel send out its spray of threshed maize. No one stopped his work to speak to her. It was harvest-time, and men come to Canada to work, not to loiter.

She walked home and got supper ready.

The routine of the days filled them. Breakfast was ready at six o'clock, and when it was nearly noon she used to watch for the men bringing in their teams to water them in the yard, and by the time they had stabled them it was the moment to get the steaming pot off the fire, and to serve the great pieces of pork in the dishes set ready.

The men slept in the lodge, and went to bed early: on Sundays they lay in bed nearly all day: if they had an old newspaper to read they were happy. None of them removed their clothes at night; they used to roll out of bed and comb their hair, and come and have dinner in the

living-room on Sundays. Some of them washed now and then, but there was not a razor between them. One does not come to Canada to shave, but to work.

She used to ask the men who sat next to her at table what they intended to do in the winter-time, and heard that they were going to lumber camps or to pulp manufactories. Some of them only worked through the harvest-time, and then two or three, as the case might be, would seek some little deserted shack somewhere and make it as weathertight as possible, gather wood and buy canned food for the winter, and so live till the spring came again. None of them wanted to talk about themselves. None of them wanted to talk about their homes. None of them wanted to talk about anything. They worked hard all day, sometimes all night too. People do not come to Canada to talk.

After harvest they disappeared, all but the hired man—the Galician with the long hair. He stayed on through the winters.

There was still the arrival of the furniture to look forward to. It had been shipped long ago from England: sometimes Hester thought it would never come. Gabriel said he would take

his waggon and drive over to the station some day to see if it was there, but nothing could be done in harvest-time (the price of grain is probably more than its cost per bushel).

Gabriel hardly cared what his harvest was like this year. There were rumours that the branch line of the C.P.R. was to be begun soon.

"You'll get your boxes and things delivered at your own door then," he said; "there seems to be no doubt about it this time."

"I wish I could have the furniture before Annie comes," Hester said.

Now that the harvest was over the Spenses were going to make their move, and on their way out to the farm they were to stay with Gabriel Leach and his wife. Hester wished the house might look better. She had scrubbed it clean more than once since the men left, but the boards would probably always look grey. She wished she had a few flowers, and she asked Annie if she could procure a coloured table-cloth at the store and bring it to her with several other things that were needed. Annie's visit was an event to be looked forward to with almost passionate eagerness, and when it came to pass there was no disappointment about it. She was as

bright and well as ever, and as thoughtful too! The big bundle which she brought stowed away in the waggon seemed to contain just the things Hester Leach most wanted, and the table-cloth was nearly too good to be true.

"You are too thin, Hester," Annie said, "and you've been working much too hard."

"I have been working hard," Hester admitted, "but I shall have all the winter to rest in." She turned away from the subject and said, "Gabriel says that Donald has not bought his farm a day too soon. The C.P.R. shops have come to Macredie, have they not?"

"That means fortunes for us all!" cried Annie.

"I have been wondering," Hester said, "what one does with a fortune on the prairie."

"Perhaps it won't be a prairie for very long! What about a motor car, Hester? and a fine house with bathrooms?" She looked round the bare little room as she spoke.

"I hope my furniture will come before the winter sets in," Hester said, following her look.

"Donald has been doing his best about it, and the last telephone message he had, said it was on its way."

"I have a piano and a bookcase full of books. Annie, what shall I do if it doesn't arrive before the winter snows begin?"

"Remember you are to have me on a visit!" Mrs. Spens said. She was to go to her new home and put it in order, and then return to Macredie to await the arrival of a small person whom they always alluded to in a sort of fond joke as McGinty.

"I will rest several days with you, if I may," said Annie, "so be prepared for a troublesome visitor."

"I would like to have everything in order before you come."

"Well, Donald says you will be quite safe to send down for the furniture in a day or two: it's sure to be there."

It was sad to part with Annie, but she looked very happy driving away over the grey-yellow prairie with Donald beside her, and a big waggon of household goods going on in front.

"Mrs. Leach looks tired," Donald said, when they had left the door.

"I don't believe she ever had a duster in her hand at the Vicarage," Annie answered. "Although she was kept busy looking after the old

gentleman there were always plenty of servants about the house."

"She's getting quiet," said Donald; "Leach could afford to take her home for a trip if he liked, and I hear that he may have to go to England in connection with the sale of some land."

"Oh, he ought to take her," said Annie, "the trip home would do her good."

Hester heard the news of his possible departure from Gabriel himself. "I'll have to go to England before very long," he said; "there's no other way I can do the business."

When she found she was not to go with him she said with a burst, "I can't possibly go—I can't leave Annie." That saved her pride. Afterwards, in the solitude of the night, she lay awake and said to herself that she had believed Gabriel was growing fond of her. She was startled at the word she used, and added, "he was always fond of me."

"I'll get your furniture over before I go," he said, and one day he drove away in the waggon and returned with great cases containing tables and chairs and pictures and boxes of old fragrant linen, and even some curtains for the windows.

"I couldn't bring your piano or the bookcase," he said, and, in her disappointment, she cried out

more sharply than she knew, "Oh, I must have them." She heard the cases were far too big to move and to transport so many miles, but even then she said almost piteously, "Those were the things I wanted most."

He told her subsequently that he had got a good price for them from the new dépôt-agent. "I couldn't know," he said, "which were the things you would want most, so I sold the two heaviest." And indeed, it would have been difficult to bring them from the station.

There was altogether too much furniture, and Gabriel pointed this out to his wife in excuse for having left the two big cases behind. "You couldn't do with more," he said once more; "you couldn't do with more."

A piano and a table were the same things to him; they were both pieces of furniture.

She decided to furnish the little empty room with the extra furniture that she had. It would serve as a drawing-room for her, when the hired men were in the house for so many meals, making the atmosphere heavy. Gabriel moved everything for her. He was a man who worked deftly, for all his size, and he had a curious habit of doing everything just as Hester directed him, without

comment of any sort. On the farm, he was considered masterful despite his quiet ways, and shrewd about his money.

The nights were getting cold now, and the principal work of the autumn was finished. Gabriel began to pay off most of the men. Even they looked tired after the autumn race to save the harvest before the snows came. The house became empty: the encroaching silence drew near again.

Once a lonely figure appeared on the empty prairie and increased in size from a little speck till a tall and slender youth came and knocked at the door. Hester went and opened to him, for no one was in the house but herself. The boy was good-looking, with grey eyes and a clear complexion, but he was thinner than he should have been.

She asked him if he had come far.

“I have walked a good bit,” he said.

“Ah! You are from the old country!” exclaimed Hester.

“Yes.”

He was talking with an accent which she had not heard for some time. She bade him sit down, and he did so without awkwardness although he was only a tramp looking for work.

"They told me at Macredie that you wanted extra hands up here. They finished threshing where I was."

"We have nearly finished too," she told him, "but"—for she was willing to detain the youth—"I think we might find you something to do."

"I am stronger than I look," he said.

When she began to cook the dinner she fancied that the smell of it increased the look of hunger in the boy's face: she went and fetched him bread and some wholesome food, the remains of the men's breakfasts, and brought it to him where he sat on one of the chairs in the living-room, dangling a ragged hat between his knees. He rose when she came to him, and she liked his mannerliness and had half a mind to ask him news of home—the boy was so evidently English, and his speech was gentle. But she knew it was not the way in Canada for anyone to tell his family history or his own history either. Perhaps it was better so: there were many histories that had to be forgotten in Canada, and where no one spoke of the past it was not invidious to keep silence about it.

She came from the kitchen again, with an excuse prepared for speaking to him, and she

found that he had fallen asleep with his head upon the table. She moved more softly about the house as she prepared the men's dinner. She set the common spoons and forks neatly upon the table, and saw to the boiling of a gigantic stew and the making of a pudding : it was always rumoured that the hired men on Leach's farm were made very comfortable. He woke up when she was lifting a heavy pot, and offered to move it for her.

Gabriel must certainly find work for him, but it would be kinder still to provide a day's rest since the boy appeared so tired. She gave him dinner when the other men came in, and wondered whether Gabriel disapproved of his presence or not. He said nothing : she never knew what he thought or did not think.

After dinner the boy asked him for work, and was refused. Hester made up a little bundle of food for him, and in the packet she placed two English sovereigns which were her own. But first she went to the Galician hired man, and asked him if he could not find a job for the stranger.

“He'd better pike it,” said the Galician.

They were the same words that Gabriel had used. No one was likely to take a hired man who was not wanted, out of charity. Not even

the men who had worked well last year were taken on in preference to others. There was no sense of old service anywhere. No one had an old servant. The men demanded high wages; living was dear, they said. Some day, when Canada had enough men to do its work, things might be different.

Between master and men there was not only no sympathy, but not the barest feeling of reciprocity. If an employer was peremptory the men quitted. If the men were idle they got the sack. If a hand was not wanted he was not hired.

As the boy walked away from the door Hester noticed that he was wearing an old Eton tie.

When the first snow came it was ugly. The ground was a drab-yellow after the harvest had been gathered in, and the snow came in November—a greyish snow, drifting across the drab-yellow. Hester used to watch it from the window—there was not much to watch, and Gabriel said he had better get away before a heavier fall should come. They kissed at parting, and she said to herself, “He is fond of me, he is very fond of me.” He made many arrangements for her comfort during the time that he would be away. There was a

big pile of wood in the yard, and a well-filled store cupboard with shining tins of potted provisions. He had dragged a bag of flour and a bag of potatoes into her little sitting-room—there was plenty of room for them there—and she did not tell him that they spoiled the room. In the corner of the kitchen there was a huge barrel of water standing close to the stove where it would keep thawed, and he told her that when the snow came high up to the panes of the window, she would be able to lift out the sash from the inside and fill a bowl from the drift and melt it for drinking purposes—the water in the barrel would taste stale after a time.

On the last night of all he told her what he would do when he had made his fortune. "The thing's as good as settled now," he said.

She wanted to talk about the six or eight weeks of loneliness in front of her, and said, "I hope I shall not be frightened."

"I am leaving the Galician," he said. (He had never even inquired the man's name.)

There were two horses in the stable which the man would look after, and he would see also to bringing her wood and to re-filling the cask of water. He would do jobs for her, but he was

not to be trusted alone. Someone always had to be on the farm looking after things, otherwise everything went to waste and money was dropped.

"I'll have Annie's visit," she said, willing to look on the bright side of things.

"Spens 'ull need to take his wife down to Macredie sharp," Gabriel said, "the snows 'ull be heavy this year."

"I hope there won't be any wolves," she said.

"There'll be the little kyots when the cold comes, but they won't hurt you."

"I suppose Donald will bring Annie down in a sleigh?"

"Yes; I'm told he's getting a sleigh ready up there."

She gave her husband some little commissions to do for her in England. "It is strange," she said, "to think of your seeing London and the shops."

"London is where I'm going to clean up the dollars," he said; "there's plenty lying about there, I've heard."

She told him what he must go and see, and how beautiful some of the old buildings were.

"Maybe I'll have time to see some of them," he said.

The last thing he did for her was to fix a heavy blanket, like a curtain, across one of the windows—"You'll be all right," he said.

After his departure the snow came very thickly. It had not begun to drift yet, but fell silently, persistently, and with a sort of plaintive obstinacy. There seemed to be no upward toss of the flakes: there was no wind: the snow simply fell to the ground and remained there.

It fell for two days, silently, heavily, and then the sky cleared, and the Galician hired man dug out paths across the yard, and she went sometimes to see the two horses in the stable and to hear the sound of a human voice.

There were many things which she had not been able to do during the busy harvest time, and these occupied her now continuously. There were things to put in order and sewing to be done. She did some repairs in her neat-handed way, and washed and rearranged the common china which had been put back carelessly on the shelves. When all her little jobs were finished she used to stand a good deal by the window and look out. Once or twice she wrote long letters home, to be sent at the first opportunity that offered itself. The weather was not so very cold yet, and the

dazzling purity of the white snow with the sun upon it was wonderful to look at. She cooked meals for herself and the hired man, and once she asked him if she might mend his clothes and do some washing for him. He slept in the little lodge in the yard, and kept himself busy by fetching wood and looking after the team, and keeping tools in order and the machine in repair. He dug more paths in the snow too, and brought fresh water into the house. Once she heard him singing about his work, and that day did not seem so long as some of the others. For other company there was a little cloud which she used to watch in the sky which always came up before sunset—a long, trailing cloud in the limitless arch. There was very little of outward incident in her life except the coming of the cloud which always seemed to bring a message with it. The sky fitted down close upon the prairie, but the gentle dark cloud on the horizon came in from somewhere outside—she never knew how it came. She always stood in the window and watched for it.

“There’s my cloud,” she used to say.

When the days drew in shorter and colder the cloud became more than a mere visitor—it had

something heavenly in its coming. She was not forgotten so long as it appeared. Like those who trust God's mercy because of a rainbow, she seemed for a time to lose her sense of loneliness when the soft trailing cloud appeared in the sky. Once she made a little hymn to it, calling it "Cloud of my soul," in imitation of Keble's verses. Even in the unspeakable silence of the night she used to comfort herself with the thought that God sent His angel daily to her to tell her she was not forgotten.

There were some balls of worsted in the house and some knitting-needles; she looked often at them, but always put them on one side saying, "Perhaps the solitude will become worse some day, and then I shall begin my knitting." The knitting was saved as hungry men save provisions against a worse day of need.

The gloom settled in the sky, and there came another heavy fall of snow. She said to the hired man when he came in to tea, "I have not seen my cloud all to-day."

"It's all cloud," he said in his lisping fashion.

"But there's one particular one," she said, "which comes up in the sky just before sunset. I didn't know until I learned to love it, how

dependent one is upon familiar things. There's very little that is familiar here."

"You are strange to it," he said.

"I suppose there's something about us all," she went on, "which makes us long for the same thing to happen every day, or every week. At home we hardly know how much we should miss the postman's daily call did he not arrive so punctually, and on Sundays we should feel a positive sense of calamity if we did not hear the church bells ringing."

The hired man ate without speaking.

Every week she gave him his wages, and thought how absurd was a symbol of barter in a place where barter was impossible. He always thanked her for them, and seemed glad to have them.

There was still Annie's visit to look forward to, and she thought with a speechless longing of the joy that the young mother would have, and of the sense of companionship that the child would bring. Annie and Donald probably did not know that she was alone, and she had no means of getting a word conveyed to them, but when Donald would bring down the sleigh with his wife in it, she thought she would beg them to send someone to her, even if it was only

Fletcher's little girl at Macredie. Once she thought that twenty-five miles would not be an impossible length of walk for a man, and she asked the Galician if he could make the journey for her.

"Not in this snow, of course," he said, and smiled.

She sat at her window long that afternoon watching for her heavenly messenger, and when it came she called to the man outside to come and see it too. She said to herself, "Perhaps it is not real, perhaps it's only my fancy," and she wanted the foreigner to say that he saw it, as men who see visions ask for some sort of corroboration of what is plainly visible to them.

"It comes every afternoon," she said to him, and answered, running the letters together in a shuffling way, "That's the C.P.R."

"But it can't be in Heaven," she said; "it's everywhere in my world here. We are going to be rich when it comes, we are going to have houses and company; we shall never be alone when the C.P.R. comes here, but that little cloud comes out of the sky."

"Afternoon train far away," he said. "It's not cloud—it's smoke."

She was his employer, and he was pleased to find her wrong. He went out smiling to himself.

On the next day she began to do her knitting. If she worked only two hours a day at making socks they would not very soon be finished. She sat near the window, for the sky was heavy again, and the hired man told her that the snowfall would be blinding and the cold very great. He brought huge piles of wood into the house and filled the water-barrel with water, and stored the stable with hay and filled a barrel of water there, too, for the horses. He piled wood against the side of the house, and made his own little lodge secure.

When the snow came it was a blizzard. The thermometer dropped. It seemed incredible that it could go any lower; the sky was dark and the small fine snow fell ceaselessly. Hester put more blankets on her bed, and drew it into the living-room and placed it near the stove. She began to fear that she might let the fire go out while she slept, and the haunting thought kept her alert through the nights. There was nothing now to do but to eat what was necessary and to keep warm. One morning she woke to find that the snow had blocked all the windows, and she sat all

that day in darkness until the Galician came with his spade and dug his way to the pane. The cold was intenser than she had ever imagined it could be: once, when she opened the window to fill her bowl with snow, it seemed to catch her breath for a moment. She looked at her store of provisions, and knew that they would last her well—she had not hunger to fear, but the cold terrified her. When the snow ceased the thermometer did not rise, and one of the horses was found frozen dead in the stable. The hired man gloomed all day, and when the second horse fell sick he sat with his head between his hands thinking and grieving. When the weather cleared, and the powdery snow was firmer, he put on a pair of snowshoes and walked away. He was always afraid of Gabriel.

Hester did not know what time he left, but she saw the tracks of his shoes for a long way over the prairie, and he never came back; she did not know what became of him. She did what she could for the sick horse—made mashes for it, and applied such simple remedies as she knew of. The deep-cut path between the house and the stable became trodden by her, and in the bitter weather she walked backwards and forwards when she could.

The hours passed horribly slowly in the house. She fetched her knitting, and unravelled the socks which she had made, and re-knitted them. She knitted and re-knitted until the wool grew thin.

When the sun shone again it showed her the dome of heaven like a round cover shutting her in. She only knew that she had to make up the fire punctually—if she grew ill, or even if she slept too long, the fire might go out. She made herself say verses aloud from all the poems she could remember, for a terror came upon her that she would forget the sound of human voices if she did not speak. She used to walk up and down, lilting the rhymes of her childish days, and she worried beyond measure if she could not remember the sequence of the ten little nigger-boys and their tragic fates. She kept the horse alive, and spoke to it sometimes in the stable. Morning and evening were very much alike, and so was mid-day too. She carried the logs, and boiled water and made tea sometimes, otherwise there was nothing to do. At night time she used to hear the little kyots about the yard, and, being a timid woman, she lay and trembled. There was a gun of her husband's in the rafters, but she did not know how to load it. She had her two or

three little devotional books, and she read them aloud and found a certain comfort in them. Some day the winter would end, and some day the Spenses would arrive. She wondered if they would be able to drive in the unusual depth of snow, and she became anxious about Annie. Then the days grew fair again, and she knew they would come soon. She used to stand every day for hours by the window looking for them. And then one day Donald came, but he came alone. He had his sleigh with him, and bade her get into it; and all the time she never dared to speak of Annie, because she knew from his face that Annie was dead. She put a few things in a bundle, and put on some heavy wraps and locked the door, and got into the sleigh beside him. Its runners scrunched on the snow, and the sun shone brilliantly overhead. Once he said to her, "I did what I could for her," and she thought she must have forgotten what the sound of human voices was like, because his sounded so strange.

After they had travelled for a mile or two he began to speak again, but the awe of what he had been through was upon him, and he was not consecutive in his talk.

"She ought to have started sooner," he said,

"if it hadn't been for the snow. She ought to have got down to Macredie more than a week ago." He remembered to say to her even in his anguish, "You will have been waiting for us, Mrs. Leach."

"Yes," she said, "I have been all alone."

"She fretted over that," he said, and, remembering all her goodness, he wept unrestrainedly, and the tears froze upon his cheeks. Hester sat beside him, and did not weep at all. She thought her heart had grown as cold as the land about her. She did not think that solitude had made her callous: she only felt that Annie had escaped from under the closely-fitting cover of sky that closed down so tightly on the prairie, and that she envied her.

But when she got to Annie's house, and saw all her dear, familiar possessions and Annie herself lying upon the bed, her grief spent itself tempestuously, and as her tears fell Donald became silent again. She noticed that he did his work about the house mechanically, but that he made up the fire too constantly. Perhaps grief had served to make his physical cold almost unbearable: he kept piling logs on the fire, and sat all night tapping them absently with the poker and shifting their

position now and again. Once he went to a room at the back of the house and fetched a great root, the size of an elk's head, and put it on the blaze, and stabbed it fiercely, and then dropped the poker and watched it burn itself away, sitting with his chin in his hands.

The next day he told her he was going away—going home, going anywhere. He would take Annie down to Macredie, and give her a decent burial, and then he would get on board the train and go away. It didn't matter to him where he went.

He stayed with Hester the following night. When they arrived at the door he took his wife's body from the sleigh, and brought it out of the cold. Annie lay in Hester's little sitting-room all night, and her husband slept there too, and on the following day he harnessed his horses to the sleigh again, and drove away over the snow.

Hester went back and tended the sick horse. But for the sick horse she would have cried out to Donald to take her back to the little cluster of wooden houses at Macredie. She knew she had to look after the horse, and she had never questioned the inevitableness of duty. Gabriel had told her to take care of his things. She watched

Donald disappear, and turned back to the interior of the house again.

Grief for Annie numbed her for a time. She did not even feel terror at nights now: there seemed something so much worse than terror, and that was losing Annie. She made up the fire and kept the horse alive, but she no longer knitted her socks or said any little rhymes as she walked up and down the house. She supposed some day, not very far distant now, Gabriel would return. When Donald managed to send a letter out to her from Macredie from her husband, saying he was detained in England longer than he expected, she sat with folded hands and watched the sky. The preparation of food became mechanical, but the fire had a life of its own: she looked at it for hours together, and then went and looked out of the window.

Perhaps the spring was not very far off now—she did not know. She wondered if, when the spring came, the sky would lift and let her out. In the clear weather she saw the faint smoke of the far-distant train on the horizon again, and she clung to the thought that there were men and women in the train—men and women looking eagerly out of the windows—men and women

eating dinners in the restaurant-cars—men and women saying that the prairies had a charm of their own—men and women talking of the free, wild life of the West.

“I wonder how it gets out—I wonder how the train gets out,” she often thought. She sat and wondered much about it. When the spring came the snow would melt, and the walls of the sky would melt too—it would be easy enough for the train to get through when the spring should come, but there, over where the little thin black cloud was, how had the train pierced and penetrated the walls?

Donald had said there had never been such a winter as this: she piled more wood on the fire and sat beside it, and watched the flames leap and heard the wood crackle—the fire at least was alive in the midst of the solitude.

The house was quite tidy when Leach arrived there. Hester had everything very neat about her. The bed was made in an orderly manner, and the sheets were clean: all the little arrangements of the house were scrupulously exact, even her shoes were brushed and the crumbs were swept from the carpet. She came to the door to meet him, and he told her that

his fortune was made, and that the branch line was begun.

"How will it get through?" she said.

He told her once more of the town that was to grow up where they stood, and of the prices promised him for town-lots, and she asked him more about the matter than she had ever asked him before.

"Will we ever get out?" she said, and then she told him she was puzzled because only the C.P.R. ever got through the walls. "It's a magic train," she said, "only I think we ought to be let out too."

She spoke less than usual in the months that followed—people on the prairie have not much to talk about. The spring work had begun with its rush of labour, but afterwards there was the pause which comes before the harvest, and Leach took his wife down to see the doctor at Macredie.

Already the station was a place of some considerable size, and buildings were growing up everywhere. There were advertisements of tobacco on all the hoardings, and flaring posters about chewing-gum. In great letters on a newly-built house was written, "Bert Jackson's Saloon. Billiards." There were two quick-lunch rooms,

and on both sides of the railway line were houses set down indiscriminately, and made of unvarnished wood. The Spenses' old house looked quite small and shabby beside the new ones, and it was evidently used as a dépôt for the forwarding of goods. The wheat elevator had begun to be active again in anticipation of its autumn work, and some old trucks which had stood for very long on the siding were being used as shelters by men working on the railway. The population of the place had increased sevenfold—many other places were increasing much quicker. Some people said, "It will be another Winnipeg in miniature."

Gabriel owned half the place: he was called Boss by all the men there.

His wife saw the doctor, who kept her at Macredie for several days, and then Leach took her in the train to Brandon, where the Asylum is.

“THE KID”

“THE KID”

THERE was a boy who went to Canada once with no very clear ideas in his mind except that he meant to keep his head up. He was the unsuccessful member of a distinguished family, and he had no money and very little experience, also he had to look Canada up on the map before he went there, to be quite sure where he was going. Everyone told him he would find plenty to do, and he took an expensive saddle with him, a suit of evening clothes and a long knife, and, thus prepared for every emergency, he set sail.

His brother came to see him off, and this made him very proud, because he worshipped and admired his brother, as many others worshipped and admired him. He was “Courtney, the V.C. man,” and Malise knew himself to be nothing but “Courtney’s young brother.” He had never desired greater distinction for himself, and he wished, as he and the great man sat

together at lunch in the saloon of the ship before sailing, that there were some method not connected with swank which would convey to his fellow-passengers the intelligence that it was “Courtney, V.C.,” by whom he sat.

Major Courtney in plain tweed clothes escaped notice altogether, and it disappointed Malise (who nevertheless detested the practice) that his brother was not even asked to write his name in young ladies’ albums before they set sail.

It was not the custom among the distinguished family of whom Malise was a humble member to give each other advice, and Major Courtney had not intended to offer his young brother any. But the boy looked absurdly young to be going out into the world alone, and it occurred to the Major to say suddenly: “How old are you, Malise?”

“Eighteen—not far off nineteen,” the youth said.

Courtney, V.C., was silent for a long time while he ate cold lamb. He was preparing a speech, and that was always a difficult matter with him, for he was a man of few words. He thought of all the things he had read of in books which elder brothers said at parting, and

he wished he could say them. Phrases such as: “the temptations you will meet with,” “difficulties you will have to face,” “new surroundings” and “the old Home” occurred to him and were rejected at sight. Then he thought of “remember your mother” and “don’t forget that you are a gentleman.” These two were rejected because, however little brilliant the boy might be, he could hardly imagine him forgetting his mother or not behaving like a gentleman. So these well-known phrases also died away on his lips, and he finished his cold lamb and tomato, and ate some excellent ship’s pudding, still without speaking.

Malise remained silent also. He would not adventure to make conversation for his brother when he seemed to wish not to talk, for he was a well brought up boy, and had been to a public school where respect for elders is not so much inculcated as enforced.

People began to rise from their places, and to go on deck in order to see to their luggage. Major Courtney wiped his heavy moustache, and the brothers went up on deck together. Already shore-going visitors were leaving the ship, and a steward, with a short jacket on and a bustling

manner, said to Malise: "The second bell has gone, sir."

"Thanks: I'm sailing," said the boy.

It then occurred to Major Courtney, V.C., that he had allowed most of the precious moments at his command to slip by unredeemed by well-spoken advice. He cleared his throat behind his huge moustache, and said: "You ain't troubled with sea-sickness are you, young 'un?"

"I've never missed a meal yet," said Malise proudly.

"Got your luggage all right?"

"Down in my cabin. Forbes, who was with me at Eton, has the upper bunk."

"Is that Colonel Forbes' boy?" said Major Courtney with interest.

Malise nodded.

"I suppose I mustn't get left behind," said the Major presently.

The brothers shook hands, and Major Courtney drew two five-pound notes from his pocket-book and handed them to his young brother.

"Thanks awfully!" said the youth.

"I don't suppose they sent you out too well provided for," the Major said, smiling.

The Courtneys were proverbially hard up, and

sent their sons to Eton and into good regiments, and lived in an old house in the country which was never properly warmed.

"Good-bye," he said, and wrestled once more with difficult speech. "Drop me a line if things ain't too comfortable." And with that he was gone.

Young Forbes was going out on a fishing expedition, and asked Malise to join him, which he did, feeling rich with his brother's ten pounds in his pocket. The two boys had a canoe and tents and enjoyed themselves enormously, and when young Forbes sailed for home Malise went to Montreal to see him off, and finished up with a topping dinner at the hotel, and that exactly cleared him out of every shilling he possessed.

Thereupon he resolved to work, and he went to an immigration office, and found there was a fee to pay, so he turned away from that door and went to another, where he was asked what he could do, to which his only reply was that he was strong and he supposed he could work.

The man at the office went over a list of employments, none of which Malise felt were peculiarly his job, and he left with the acquired knowledge that there were many more trades in

the world than he was aware of, and that he belonged to none of them.

He went back to the hotel, packed his portmanteau, and asked if he might leave it there in the meanwhile, and then wondered where he would sleep that night. Fortunately, as he turned a jacket upside down to fold it, a forgotten sovereign rolled out of one of the pockets, and Malise made that same coin last exactly three days. At the end of which time he was hungry.

“What on earth can I do?” he thought. “I suppose my education cost a couple of thousand pounds; I wish I had that now to start with!”

It was by chance, as he walked disconsolately through one of the back streets of the city, whose pavements he had heard were strewn with gold, that the smell of a stable reminded him that he could ride. He went in and asked for a job, and was told that he could be taken on as a washer of cabs. So he began washing cabs, and rather enjoyed it until he found how few he could do in a day and how bitterly cold the water was with which he washed.

It was autumn weather now, and the temperature did not rise as the winter proceeded. Malise wanted warm clothes, and found that the high

wages which prevailed in Canada were met to a nicety by the high cost of living, and, feeling the cold becoming inconveniently sharp, it occurred to him that the life of a washer of cabs was not quite good enough. His fellow workers were two Irishmen who were always drunk, and to whom he became sincerely attached because of their knowledge of fox-hunting. They told him that they had been fine riders in their day, and that money was to be made in Canada by horse-breaking.

Malise, feeling very chilly, sought this means of employment, and found it at the hands of a rich man, who was unable to ride himself, and who put him on almost unmanageable animals, and paid him well for risking his neck. He was stableman as well as horsebreaker, and had his meals with the servants in the kitchen.

The cook was good to him, and made him porridge in the morning, and the younger maids called him “Impertinent,” and used to try to box his ears. He wore very loose breeches and very tight leggings in those days, and was not unhappy. His bedroom was warmed, and he bought a coat with a sheepskin lining to it. Also he learned to know that he was “a kid,” and nothing else. His

youth had always been against him, except in the matter of light-weight riding, but he had to drop his name, being advised thereto by the Irishmen, who told him that no one would put up with it in Canada.

With the loss of his name a good deal of his identity seemed to go, and he used to keep old letters beside him addressed to Malise Courtney, Esq., and wondered vaguely sometimes where Malise Courtney had gone.

He damaged himself considerably one day in riding a brute of a horse, who tried to scrape him off the saddle by cleverly bringing him into contact with the stable door and nearly breaking his foot. The foot swelled to an unusual size, and Malise lay in bed, and the cook brought him porridge and other good things, and he always called her “Queen of my Heart” because she was so old and so ugly. This increased her deep affection for him, and she wept when he went away, and said she would make it hot for the newcomer.

The newcomer was, to speak frankly, a human wreck, and so much addicted to whisky that there was absolutely no chance of his ever being anything else but a wreck. He had come from the village at home where the Courtneys’ big cold

house was, and his father and mother thought he was making his fortune in Canada. They were old people, and had saved and pinched all their lives to give the dissipated youth a good education. He came to see Malise, and wept for a whole afternoon while he recounted his woes. Malise remembered the man well, and had a sneaking admiration for him, because in the old days of the Courtneys' prosperity his father had been stud groom to the family. He reminded the man, whose nerve was completely gone, that he used to be able to ride, and ended by saying impulsively: “Look here, Soames, I'm going to the West, as I know a man has a chance there. I believe they would take you on here, and I don't mind saying that you're the best rider in Northamptonshire.”

It was upon hearing of the wastrel's appointment that the cook who made porridge “let them all,” as she expressed it, “have it.” Even her master got a piece of her mind, and she upbraided Malise with ingratitude.

“Who will look after you in the West?” she said sharply to him, and the Kid replied: “Queen of my Heart, there's nothing for it but for you and me to fly together.”

Whereupon she “ had at him ” with a rolling-pin, and said that she was not one to take impertinence from anyone !

He kissed her at parting, and she gave him two pairs of socks which she had knitted herself, and told him that he would find the West much worse than he expected.

Which he did.

After many vicissitudes he learned the stoker’s humble trade at last, and made up furnaces in the middle of the night, and piled wood in order to earn enough to keep himself alive, and he slept where he could, and hadn’t a friend to speak to, and wished very often from the bottom of his heart that he was dead, until hunger stared him in the face, and then he tried with all his might to keep alive. His youthful appearance continued to be against him in the matter of getting work. He looked much younger than his years, and had a very beautiful complexion and a lip without a hair upon it. Lately he had become very thin, which emphasized the youthfulness of his appearance and his slenderness ; his hands were covered with notches and scars : he seldom spoke without using fiery oaths, and, when he could afford it, which was seldom, he drank

whisky to keep himself warm. He sent his address to no one, for his address was a changeful thing and precarious.

It was by chance that a letter from his mother reached him; in it she suggested that, as he was in Western Canada, he might perhaps “ride over” and call upon some distant cousins of hers who seemed to have a charming place at Lakefield.

Lakefield happened to be a hundred miles distant from the city where at present the youth kept himself alive, and it was just as likely as not it might have been five hundred miles away. His dear mother would probably think that he would mount some excellently tended horse, brought to the door by a respectful groom, and would “ride over” to some place within that little circle known as Western Canada.

He buttoned the letter up in his jacket, and said to himself that he wished people would not trouble to forward his mail to him, and that he didn’t want to hear from home; and he lived on jobs and managed to get enough to eat, and almost forgot England and Eton and the dim old big cold house in the country, and thought he had been born in this land where the snow took such a d——d long time to melt, and where no one

knew what his name was. When the spring came he felt less frightened of starvation, because in the spring there is always work for everyone to do, and with the melting snow came a sense of hope and plenty.

He was taken on by a farmer at forty dollars a month, and he slept in a room with four young Canadians. He was well fed, and the farmer's wife washed his clothes for him. Also he was not alone, which fact restored his soul and his mind.

When a pause came in the work, as it does when the crops are ripening and before harvest begins, he put the few dollars he had been able to save in his pocket, and prepared to take train for Lakefield, where his mother's cousins lived. He had never seen them or heard of them before, but with the spring had come a longing which he was unable to stifle to be Malise Courtney again, and to get away from banking up furnaces in the middle of the night and tramping through the wide, electric-lighted cold streets with the deep snow upon them, and going home at dawn. That work was over, now that the warm weather was coming, and he had not been unhappy on the farm, but he was glad to be leaving it.

The four young men in the stuffy bedroom were good fellows all of them, and were civil to him when he spoke with a Canadian accent. He respected them because they made their own living, and he learned from them not to do too much work, and to threaten his employer with the Canadians' everlasting menace to "quit."

Now, however, in the splendid spring weather, and with his clothes washed, he thought he would go to Lakefield and hear how his people at home were, and would sit for once by a table with a tablecloth on it, and sleep in a bed that had sheets.

His injured foot was beginning to give him trouble again, and he mentioned this to himself as an excuse for his present softness.

It is hardly necessary to say that he never thought of writing to his mother's relations in their pleasant country place to say that he was coming, because he had got into the habit, which almost everyone in the bustling new life of Canada knows, of acting on impulse, speaking on telephones, and never making plans far ahead. He lived from hand to mouth as it were, and saw everyone else around him doing the same. He "quitted" one morning, and took his pay to the station to ask for a ticket to Lakefield, and then

found that he had only enough money to take him within thirty miles of the place, and was ashamed to go back to the farm again to ask for work to earn the few more dollars he required. He got into the humblest compartment of the train, and envied the people who could afford dinner. Some men who travelled in the same car with himself spread a newspaper upon their knees, and prepared to enjoy a friendly meal. They asked the Kid to join them—even a casual acquaintance in a railway carriage called him the Kid—and he accepted their hospitality, and filled his pipe with their coarse tobacco and revelled in a smoke.

He was not burdened with luggage, and it would have been possible to change his plans at a moment's notice. But more railway travelling was impossible, as he had only a few cents in his pocket. Still he had had a good dinner, and the open world was before him—also that world was beautiful, and the earth was damp and smelled good. He could not have told anyone what the joy of life was, but he began to whistle, and meant to enjoy his walk. There were deep snake-fences all along the road, and birds sang overhead. He asked the way of some ladies

who were standing just outside the railway station, and found that he was speaking Public School English to them, and that he had lifted his old hat, and he forgot altogether that his clothes were in rags, and that he wore overalls with several holes in them.

The ladies stood looking at him after he was gone, and one said to the other: “I wish we could give him something.”

“Oh, you couldn’t!” said her companion, laying her hand hastily upon the purse which had been produced. “He’s a gentleman. Didn’t you see the way he lifted his hat?”

They watched him swinging along down the damp road, and wondered how far he had to go, and noticed that he limped a little.

“It takes a stout heart to live in Canada,” said the elder woman with a sigh.

“Canada has been won by stout hearts,” said the younger one vigorously.

“Ah, but stout hearts have such a habit of feeling sad at times,” said the elder lady, who had had much experience.

Malise walked on, “feeling good,” as they say in Canada. When, towards evening, he bought himself a cup of coffee and some bread, they

gave him double the quantity which he ought to have had for the coin produced, and a good lump of cake as well, and he slept in a barn very comfortably and walked on the next morning.

The trouble began with his foot, which swelled horribly, and he took off his boot and sat beside some running water and bathed it, and then found it difficult to put on his boot again. Towards mid-day the pain began to make him feel a little sick, and he thought it sound economy to spend his last few cents on food.

“I’ll have to step out,” he thought, feeling that he was running a race with the damaged foot, and that he must get in to Lakefield before it beat him outright.

Shortly after this, a young man with a team gave him a lift, and he sat beside him and told him that his foot did not hurt in the least, and that Canada was an awfully decent place. The young man agreed with him, but said that bars were a temptation, and described the thriftless manner in which he himself spent his wages: “They’re the centre of interest in the town, you see, otherwise it’s dull,” the Canadian said, and Malise agreed with him, and thought of the odious bedroom which he had rented

throughout the winter, and the horrible loneliness of it.

“I like Movies,” the young man said, “they’re fine.”

Malise said that they were top hole, and he and the young Canadian got on very well together and were sorry to part.

“Good-bye, Kid,” he said when they came to the forked roads. “Good luck to you.”

Malise winced as he put his foot to the ground, and the driver of the team said: “You should do something for that foot.” After that Malise set out to walk the last four miles of his journey.

He never noticed now what the springtide beauty of the country round him was like. He fixed his eyes upon the road, and was glad he had a stick to lean on, and he tried walking on his heel for the first mile and on his toe for the second mile, and did not know which was the more painful, and he was afraid to take off his boot in case he could not get it on again. He began to feel frightened, as a boy will who is alone with a trouble of any sort. He and his foot seemed to be companions in misfortune, and he was too careful to risk sleeping another night in the open. He lay down by the road-

side for a time, and when he began to walk again he told himself he didn't care a hang—there was nothing for it but to take off his boot. The leather was hurting him with every step, and he could not get the beastly thing off without slitting it up the front with his knife. Fortunately the roads were soft, and felt deliciously cool to the burning heat of the inflamed joint, the long twilight would favour him, and he meant to get in before it was dark. Once a big dog trotted alongside of him for a time, and he locked his hand in the beast's collar, and was dragged along in this way with some ease to himself. The dog seemed to know what he was doing, but there came a point at which he would go no farther. There was a good deal of tail-wagging and hand-licking and all but spoken regrets, and then the dog trotted home again.

Malise thought he could have told, without having learned the fact, exactly the number of yards there are in a mile: he counted each one of them, and he began to ask the way over and over again in case by any mischance he should add one more to their number. Once he heard a girl say to her sister reprovingly, when he had asked the way again, “ You should not speak

to tramps,” and, as he was near his destination now, he tried to make himself respectable before arriving. He dragged straight the handkerchief which he wore round his neck, settled his ragged hat, and pulled on the boot with the great slit in it. His toilet thus completed he asked the way once more, and said he believed the place he was looking for was a country house. His mother’s letter had raised this vision up before him, but the man whom he asked replied that he didn’t know what could be meant by a country house.

“There’s a farm,” he said, “up at Helena, and a shack over there in the wood, and a farm just ahead of you which I believe is called Lakefield, where Mr. Heathcote used to live.”

“That’s the man,” said Malise; “he’s still there, isn’t he?”

“I guess he’s gone home to England,” the man said, “but he’s left his manager there—an Englishman by the name of Courage, I believe.” He was a clever farmer, the man told Malise, and a bright chap, who looked well after Mr. Heathcote’s property.

“I’ll go on and see him.”

“Well, I guess, Kid, you don’t look like going

much farther,” the man said, to which Malise replied that he was all right.

When he reached the gateway of the Heathcote property he told himself what a fool he had been to have pictured the place a red-roofed English house set in trees, and wondered why he had done so. He found a wooden house with the paint peeling off it, with an attempt at a flower-bed at one side of it, and a verandah with a broken paling. Some huge farm buildings stood near and overshadowed the poor house, and the place looked solitary enough with the great wide lands about it and not another house near. There was no approach to the door, but Malise walked across the grass, and found a man sitting on the broken-down verandah smoking a pipe. He then began to wonder why he had come, and why, even if Mr. Heathcote had been at home, a man should be bothered by the visit of an unknown distant cousin. He felt quite suddenly, and with an overwhelming rush of disappointment, that he had made a mistake in coming, and he stammered badly as he said to the man on the verandah that he had come in the hope of finding Mr. Heathcote at home.

“Mr. Heathcote’s in England,” the man said.

“What did you want with him, suppose he had been at home?”

“I thought I’d just come to see him,” said the boy.

“Well,” said the man, “if you have plenty of time for paying calls, I suppose you expect to come and sleep here for the night, but as Mr. Heathcote is in England you can leave your card.”

He was evidently amused as he spoke, and Malise knew that he was being closely scanned from head to foot, and he became aware once more of his shabby overalls and his decayed hat and the horrible rent in his boot. He had a horror of being turned away, so he plunged into his next remark, and said: “I thought Mr. Heathcote might find me some work to do.”

“Why?” said the man on the balcony removing his pipe.

“I am a sort of cousin of his,” stammered the boy.

The Englishman took his pipe out of his mouth again in order to smile comfortably and at large.

“You look it,” he said.

Malise flushed hotly. “I don’t know what the relationship is,” he began.

“No, I don’t suppose you do,” the man on the verandah answered. “Ever seen Mr. Heathcote?”

“No, I haven’t,” he answered, and was aware all the time while he himself was talking with a strong colonial accent that he was hearing English as he had not heard it spoken for a long time.

“Do you know what his Christian name is?” the man asked, still smiling.

“No,” said the boy in the overalls, “I don’t believe I do.”

“What is your own name?”

“Courtney.”

The man was indulging in a pleasant form of torture, and was quite unaware of the fact. “Any relation of the V.C.?”

“He’s my brother.”

“Look here, Kid,” said the man quite kindly, “you have done enough talking for one afternoon. You go round to that door there, and I will tell them to give you some dinner, and then you had better up it and off it without any further delay, because it will be dark soon. But look here,” he said, “don’t trouble to tell that

story, for it won't do you a mite of good, out here, and you had far better invent something else. Say you're a brother of Lord Kitchener; he's better known."

He knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for he was rather tired of the conversation, which had begun well, but had now ceased to be amusing, and he went indoors and began to add up accounts.

“I suppose I'd better take the meal,” thought Malise, “and find out how to get back again.”

They gave him steaming hot stew in the kitchen, to which he found his way. Four or five men were sitting down to supper, and none of them spoke the whole time or asked him his business.

“How do I get back to Casspel?” he asked of one who seemed to be the head man.

“You can get the train quite near here,” he said, not uncivilly. “There is a station at Clematis.”

“I am out of pocket just now,” faltered Malise.

“Then you'd better pike it,” the man said, reaching his coat down from a peg on the wall.

No one took the least notice of him, nor asked

him where he meant to sleep nor what he meant to do. He had eaten his silent supper with them, and now they were going out to finish their work.

The boy sat dumbly in the kitchen for some twenty minutes or so, and then a man came in and began to clear up the things, and told him he had better quit.

He took up his hat and went out, and so across the grass again, and down the long trail between the snake fences.

“That was a quaint young shaver,” said the Manager to himself, when he had finished adding up his accounts. “I really must write and tell Mr. Heathcote about him. He shouldn’t claim so many noble friends—Heathcote himself and Courtney, V.C.—I wonder who could have put him up to the job.”

Malise meanwhile limped to Clematis, where a Salvation Army Captain found him, and put him on his back and carried him to a hospital, where he fainted, and was put to bed and nursed in supreme and delicious comfort for three solid weeks—the Salvation Army Captain meanwhile visiting him and sitting by his bed, tenderer than a woman, and giving him good words in a very strong Somersetshire accent.

He recommended him to the mercy of God when the time came for parting, and not only so, but he gave him two dollars, and, as he was a man not blessed with means but largely endowed with a generous disposition, he missed the dollars for some time afterwards, but never grudged them.

“Well, at least I’m hale and sound now,” Malise said to himself, “and no one need be badly off in Canada in harvest time.” He joined a gang of threshers, and got rough work and good pay, and he used to feel his upper lip every morning and wish his moustache would grow. When the harvest was all in he began to wonder what on earth he was going to do in the winter. No one would take him on for a lumber job, or in any position where physical strength was required, and physical strength was what everybody wanted. Nothing else seemed to be of any use—at least nothing else that poor Malise possessed. His brains were not of first-class quality, and even his good manners had long since been forgotten. He wondered how on earth men make money in Canada, and supposed it was done by some sort of sleight of hand which he had not yet acquired. He spent his few remaining dollars in applying

for jobs, and seldom got them, and wondered if he was an unemployable.

Thus thinking, he one day met his brother Courtney, V.C., in Portage Avenue, Winnipeg. His first and almost insatiable desire was to blubber like a baby. Then he took his brother's hand and shook it, and said: “What are you doing here?”

“Canada is a free country,” replied Major Courtney, “and most people want to see it.”

He had traced his brother from one address to another, and had seen the miserable places where he had lived and had guessed at the others.

“I have a month's more leave; if you are not doing anything, we might spend it together.”

“I'll come right along,” said Malise.

“Fetch your things; I'm at the Alexandra Hotel.”

In the evening, towards dinner time, Major Courtney heard a voice on the telephone which he was still unable to associate with his youngest brother; it was full of odd words, and there was a rough turn to every “r” and an accent which he knew that some people called American.

“I'm right here,” said the voice, when he asked who called.

"You're very late," said Major Courtney.
"I've been waiting dinner for you a half hour."

"They won't let me in at your hotel," the voice said. "I guess I haven't got my evening clothes and dancing pumps, nor a store suit on."

"Who wouldn't let you in?"

"The chap at the door."

Malise had always considered his brother a remarkably mild man, and he had hardly been able to believe the stories which soldiers had told him of the fierceness with which he led a charge or the joyous rage of battle that sometimes possessed him. He was almost sorry for the man at the door with the gold lace on his cap when Major Courtney had finished with him.

Then they went into the hotel together, and found dinner in a little sitting-room, and the boy in the tattered overalls ate ravenously, and his brother watched him and said nothing, but plied his plate and talked in a certain slow way he had of matters at home, of which his young brother knew nothing, and of the English politics of the day, of which he knew rather less. After dinner he found that he was to stay in the hotel in a room with a marble washing-stand in it, and silver-plated taps and a mahogany bedstead with a pale

blue frill round it. He very much wished he had some luggage, and he suddenly remembered the portmanteau that he had left at this very hotel eighteen months before. His brother helped him unlock it, and they found tweed clothes there, and boiled shirts, very much crushed, and an old black tie with a pale blue stripe in it, and socks and a suit of evening clothes. Malise wanted to say “My! That’s bully!” but he knew his brother would consider it an affectation, so he said, “I’m glad to find I’ve some kit left,” and a bell boy came at Major Courtney’s summons, and took away the clothes to be pressed.

Malise slept that night between sheets, and found it excessively uncomfortable. He kept waking up all through the night and wondering where he was, and in the morning he climbed into his store clothes and felt them uncomfortable too.

“ You won’t want those things for fishing,” his brother said at breakfast, seeing him crane his neck uncomfortably through a newly starched linen collar. “ I daresay you can get some sort of tweed things here.” He had been nearly three weeks in Canada, but he still had a lurking idea that clothes were only bought in London.

“ Can you come fishing with me?”

“I guess I can,” said the boy.

On the fishing trip he found Malise Courtney, whom he had lost, and felt rather shy of him, and he enjoyed his brother’s society with an intensity which seemed strange even to himself. He remarked that Courtney, V.C., never seemed to notice for an instant how he was dressed, nor how notched and cut his hands were, nor what a shocking condition his nails were in. He gave the impression that he never noticed anything at all, and this was an impression he gave many people, but soldiers told a different tale. Malise used to think afterwards that if his brother had found fault with him or given him good advice, or noticed that his manners were uncouth, he would probably have quarrelled with him, or made an excuse for “quitting.” He was as raw and as touchy as a young bear, and the two things that really soothed him were his brother’s absolute absence of mind about his defects, and the pleasure he himself had in the growing acquaintance with that long forgotten youth, Malise Courtney.

When he came back from the fishing expedition and added up the total of the fish, no one would have guessed that anything but fish had been in the minds of either of them the whole time.

They spoke of flies much more than they spoke of anything else, and Major Courtney never even asked what his brother had been doing before he found him, until one night Malise, quite suddenly and without comment, told him the whole story of his failures. He swaggered a little about it of course: he said that that was the way men who made their fortunes in Canada always began: he said he had roughed it a bit, and that his youth had been against him, but that on the whole he had not done too badly; and he never knew that Courtney, V.C., who was a very tender-hearted gentleman, was trying to say to himself all those encouraging things which men say about boys who get lost and have not enough to eat. He was saying: “It will make a man of him” and “It will teach him more than he could ever have learned at home,” and so on through the whole of the stock phrases which are usually applied to such a case, and at the back of it all he could hear a womanish voice within him remarking in a perfectly inconsequent manner, “He was such a little chap—such a little chap!”

The boy told his story badly, and Major Courtney pieced it together in his own mind exactly where it wanted piecing, also he respected

his young brother for not saying that he had been lonely or discouraged or miserable, and for not describing his sensations in any way, though indeed being fully conscious of them. They came back to Winnipeg together, and there were just a couple of days before Major Courtney would have to leave for England again, and he made the suggestion that his brother should decide how they would amuse themselves.

It was the suggestion that Malise had been longing for him to make during the whole time that Major Courtney had been in Canada. When it came he remarked that he didn't much mind what they did.

“Nor do I,” said Major Courtney, “which I suppose shows that we have each got a contented mind.”

“Honestly I don't mind a bit,” said Malise, his heart, which he considered a well-seasoned one, thumping a little.

“I am not inclined to sit in the rotunda of a hotel and read limp newspapers,” the Major said.

“Do you know, I believe, if you don't mind, I'd like to get out to Lakefield,” Malise said.

“Is Heathcote there?” said Major Courtney.

“No, I don't think so.”

“Well, let’s go. I’d like to see the farm.”

“There is not much to see,” confessed Malise, and his brother did not push the matter nor ply him with questions.

They took the train to Clematis quite early one morning, and Major Courtney, being a person of some forethought, took the trouble to write to his cousin’s manager, and say that he was coming. Consequently, when the man of the big moustache and his slim brother arrived at Clematis station Mr. Courage awaited them on the platform with a very genial smile upon his face, and determined to do the honours of the place. Mr. Courage was carefully dressed, and had shaved that morning —altogether he was a very spruce and well turned-out gentleman, and his face showed a genuine appreciation of the distinguished man’s visit.

“I think,” said Major Courtney, “you have met my brother?”

He noticed then for the first time that Malise had on an old black tie, with a pale blue stripe in it, and a suit of clothes whose birthplace was Saville Row, and he found Mr. Courage was noticing all this too, and frowning slightly, and wondering where on earth he could have seen the boy before.

“Well, I’m damned!” he said at last.

They drove out together to the farm in Mr. Courage's buggy, and Malise sat on the little seat at the back, and this position seemed almost like an exit on his part, and left the stage, as it were, unembarrassed by his presence. But when they reached the farm he was to the fore again. They had twelve o'clock dinner together with the men in the kitchen of the farm, and the men recognised Malise much more quickly than Mr. Courage had done. He sat amongst them at the table, and found that they wanted to shake hands with Courtney, V.C.

“He's my brother, you know,” said Malise.

And probably that was the most perfect moment of his life.

He had always admired his brother, but that day he believed that he had never noticed before what a really good fellow he was. If he saw anything, or if he knew anything, he said nothing. Once or twice Malise thought that he was trying particularly to make things easy and pleasant for Mr. Courage, and once he suspected he was rather sorry for him—that was when Mr. Courage said: “We get heaps of impostors out here, you know, and heaps of people come to me and say they are related to the Heathcotes.”

“I have no doubt that is so,” said the Major. He felt somehow that Mr. Courage was making a poor fist of it.

There was a long pause after that, and the day might have ended badly if Mr. Courage had not burst out laughing, and said: “Well, you did look a tramp, Courtney! Look here, I’ll make it up to you one day.”

That is perhaps why Mr. Courage and Malise are such friends now, and why Malise is getting on so well in Canada.

LONDON



LONDON

THIS is a story of events which happened in Canada, and in the city of London, Ont. They concern the doings of a man and a girl who fell in love with each other, and who thought that a very unusual circumstance, and who met each other "unexpectedly," and were astonished: and who wrote verses about their feelings, and said (and never meant it for a moment) that they intended to put these at the back of the fire, and forgot to do so, and read them aloud (in the later stages of the love affair); and who dreamed of each other (or said they did whether they had done so or not), and who got fonder of each other every day. It was, in fact, one of those ordinary love affairs which the chief actors therein always believe to be an entirely new event, and happening for the first time in the history of the world. And the only unusual thing about it was that the man had been in prison and was trying to forget the fact, and that

the girl knew all about it and never said a word.

The man had been to Western Canada in the days of his early and somewhat riotous youth, and he had played the fool pretty badly when he got there, and would probably have come through this phase in a perfectly satisfactory manner, and have lived a godly, righteous and sober life ever afterwards, and forgotten all about the days of his foolishness, had it not been that one fine day, or, to put the matter more exactly, one very black night, he and some kindred spirits got into a much worse row than usual, and the row involved revolver shots, and was concerned also with whisky and cards and other things which riotous youth had best leave alone until it can approach them with judgment and discretion. And it ended in youth getting a sentence of six weeks' imprisonment pronounced upon him without the option of a fine, because money was found in the wrong man's pocket, and no one could give a very clear account of anything, and this particular youth who had gone to the West did not bear a spotless character.

He served his time in New Westminster Penitentiary, Vancouver, B.C., and he served it under

the name of Jack Johnson, which was the only pseudonym he could think of at the moment, and when he came out of prison he saw what an unmitigated fool he had been, and dropped the title of Jack Johnson—which was always a misfit, for the boy was incomparably slender, and his face was pale. Having got his discharge he worked his way in quite a sober fashion to Eastern Canada, and began to work in an unostentatious way in London, Ont. He had had his lesson, and was all the better for it. But just because, at the bottom of his heart, he was a thorough good fellow, he was deadly ashamed of the Vancouver incident, and never intended as long as he lived to say anything about it. (In those days, it should be remarked, he had made up his mind that he would never fall in love and never marry.) The six weeks in the penitentiary at New Westminster had made a big black patch in his life, and he never liked looking at it or thinking about it. But it remained like a shadow, which seemed to follow him even when the sun was in mid-heaven, and the one consolation of his life was that no one knew anything about it.

As a matter of fact several people knew, and

one of them—an English cousin in whom was no manner of guile, and who looked upon the whole incident as rather a lark—told the girl with whom the youth was in love. The youth's name, when he ceased to be Jack Johnson and went back to the one which his godfathers and godmothers had given him at his baptism, was Nat Hastings, and the girl's was Rose, and the third principal character in the story was a sneak called Matthew Sparkes. No one else need concern us very much. Matthew was a smug youth who told lies and never got into trouble, and he will appear in these pages oftener than we quite want him to do, for he made things very uncomfortable for a young man whom we greatly liked, in spite of his faults, and who carried about a burden with him for many years of his life, and might just as well have told the lady of his choice all about it. For, while he thought he was keeping his secret as close as the grave, he was telling it to her quite plainly and loudly with every day that he lived, and she was longing for him to speak openly about it and take her into his confidence, and be consoled and comforted. But, being a wise woman, she waited and held her tongue.

She knew quite well that boys who go West are very often in circumstances which make getting into trouble remarkably easy. They go to practically a new country, and one where the air is intoxicating. Everything is possible, and public opinion to them is not a matter of great moment. Home is a long way off, spirits are high, good fellows detest mugs, and only a certain wholesome-mindedness keeps many boys out of mischief. But Nat had gone to the devil quickly and pretty successfully, and, although he had buried his past out of sight and could not bear to rake it up again, and although he contrasted his present life with what had gone before it almost as an old man looking back at the follies of youth is able to contrast it, he had an agonising thought constantly with him that he had been a criminal, and had slept in a cell. He did not consider this a lark; he had suffered far too deeply to call it by so contemptuous a name, but he wished to goodness he could forget all about it, and, being an honest youth, he wished to goodness that people would not now think so well of him.

For Nat Hastings had prospered. He had prospered extraordinarily, and was universally

respected, and this used to hurt him horribly. He was always trying to repudiate his character for steadiness and for being truthful and honourable. His very humility made him conspicuous in a country where humility is rare, and the respect in which he was held increased in direct measure to the humble opinion he had of himself. Everyone liked him, and everyone trusted him. With the first job that he got, an instance of extreme scrupulosity branded him for ever as an honest man. A man intent on "graft" had tried to "get at" the youth, and had failed to do so, and this so much astonished the gentleman in question that he actually chaffed Nat's employer about the strait-laced young fellow he had at the office, and told quite openly the story of the bribe he had offered, of which he was not in the smallest degree ashamed, and of its refusal.

"I suppose," he said, "this is some Sunday-school boy you have got hold of with his head filled with high-falutin' ideas!"

Mr. Landells, of the well-known firm of Landells & Mercer, Solicitors, heard of the incident, which seemed a trifling one to all concerned, and thought he would like to have Nat in his

office. He began to make inquiries about the young man, and found that the answers which they evoked were all eminently unsatisfactory, and he told Mrs. Landells all that he had heard. She delighted him (as she had a habit of doing) by agreeing heartily with his only half-formulated scheme, and said at once, "Give him a chance: just think if it had been Fred."

From the time the decision was made, and Mr. Hastings took up his position on the office stool, until the present day, his employers had had little or no fault to find with him. He was steady and industrious as well as honest, and he was so little self-assertive that he soon began to be a power in the office of Landells & Mercer. Before long he came to reap rewards. And he rose first to a place of trust, and then to one of intimate confidence with the senior partner. While other boys were still in a subordinate position, he was gaining an "interest" in the well-known legal house, and people began to envy the lucky girl who should marry him. Socially he was as great a success as he was in his work. He belonged to the Country Club, and to all the other good clubs in the place: he played tennis in beautiful big gardens belonging to rich people on Saturday

afternoons, and he had been asked to become a prominent member of the Young Men's Christian Association, and had astonished everyone, and pleased them also, by saying modestly that he did not feel he was good enough, and must decline the post.

There were those who said his humility was overdone. And that is a thing which is hardly ever said of anyone ; still, his unworthiness seemed to be a matter of genuine conviction on the young man's part, and he stuck to his decision in spite of everything that was said to him.

The girl he loved was crying inwardly all this time, and wishing she could comfort him, but he hardened his heart, and made up his mind definitely that he would not propose to her.

This, as a fact, is not a matter on which men exercise much prerogative. There came a day in autumn when there was a picnic in the maple woods, and the man and the girl were left severely to each other. They were not chaffed as they might have been, because it was known that the girl came from the Old Country, and it was feared she might be dignified. But no one would have anything to do with them during the whole afternoon, and later on, through no fault of their

own, they very naturally got lost. Rose was sufficiently independent not to bother her head very much about a chaperon, but she did wonder where the rest of the party had gone, and when evening fell, and she and her lover found themselves alone, she experienced a great deal of bliss and satisfaction in being taken care of by him, and this so upset all the poor young man's calculations that he did what every other lover would have done, and begged to take care of the beautiful Rose now and for ever afterwards.

"As for taking care of me," thought Rose with a smile—"poor darling fellow! I want to take care of him!"

They plighted their troth to each other on the mutual understanding of taking care and guarding and cherishing and loving and understanding for ever and ever—Amen. And while Rose waited to hear all about her dear boy's lurid past in Vancouver not one word of confession came. She could hardly say to him, even in the most intimate moment, "You have been in prison, haven't you?" And Hastings found it quite impossible even to mention the horrid word, so they rejoined the picnic party (which, after all, was not so difficult to find as they had imagined!), and this time they

were met by smiles, and were sent home in a little carriage together, and even, it has been reported, had an old shoe slyly tied to one of the wheels of the conveyance.

In the days that followed Nat told himself many times that he ought to make a clean breast of everything, and just confess what sort of fellow he was. But Rose was an orphan with a widowed mother belonging to her, also she sang lovely old songs which touched his poor heart, and she looked like an angel when she did so. She was good through and through, and he became so responsive to tender influences that he could not bear to hurt her by speaking of anything of which he was ashamed. All of which things made it excessively difficult for a man of the criminal class, as the unhappy young fellow called himself, to explain anything to her. Had there been a man in the party he believed he might have told him everything: if the girl had had a father he would certainly have spoken. As it was, he put his confession off indefinitely.

Now here is where Matthew the Sneak comes in. Matthew had been in Vancouver once, on a trip which was paid for by his mother, and was intended to improve his mind and to make him

capable of talking afterwards of Canada's rapid development. While he was there he collected a great deal of valuable information and asked endless questions, and once he visited a Court of Law where a young man called Jack Johnson was tried for being concerned in a row, and was condemned to six weeks' imprisonment. The affair made no sensation at all ; the young man was a stranger, and hardly anyone even knew him by sight. But Matthew had a marvellous memory for faces, and when he saw Nat years afterwards in London, Ont., he recognised him, and said nothing, because he was not a creature of impulse, and he believed that all knowledge has a certain value if it is used at exactly the right time. He was not needlessly vindictive, and might, in other circumstances, have allowed Mr. Hastings to continue his reformed existence without any interference from himself ; but Matthew was in love with Rose, and had more than once thought of proposing to her himself, and had only lacked courage to do so. He liked her better than any other girl he knew, and he did not intend that any man with an undesirable past should have her. He said this to himself several times, and meant it. But his methods of frustrating his rival were not quite those of a white

man. Matthew, as a matter of fact, was popularly supposed to have Indian blood in him ; but if that were so, it would seem that it was merely the Indians' cunning he had inherited, and not their finer qualities. He began to lay traps for Hastings, who had no recollection of ever having met him before, and he used to ask him in public whether he had ever been in Vancouver, and how he liked it, and if by any chance he knew the great Lumber Mills just below New Westminster. He never put the matter more straightforwardly than that—he could not have been straight if he had tried—but he knew the view that convicts can get of the river and the Lumber Mills, and it pleased him to watch his victim flush and stammer when replying to his simple questions.

Nat was living a life that was half torture and half bliss. The more he knew the most adorable girl in the world, the more he loved her ; and the more he knew her, the more he found out how good she was, and how well-connected. She had relations at home with high-sounding names, who began to write letters of congratulation. She had come out to Canada when her mother married a second time, and very shortly after-

wards her stepfather, who was rich and highly respected in London, Ont., died, and she and her mother decided to remain on for a year in the comfortable house, with its charming garden, which he had prepared for them. Rose loved the naming of the place, with its Thames and Westminster and Piccadilly, and she loved the old town with its broad tree-shadowed streets and pretty houses, and the air of peace about it. She told the young man all about the places at home which the names in London, Ont., recalled, and of the great city which the young Canadian must one day see for himself.

Also they went for walks and drives together, and the prosperous Nat had a brand new motor car now, in which they used to go for spins in the country. Days were like minutes, and they were so much fuller of bliss than of anxiety that they left no room for retrospect, and the fond youth became like any other happy lover, and was so happy that he hardly seemed to know what he was about. He used to steer his motor car in a serpentine manner, and did ridiculous absent-minded things, and he never felt a sane person until he was in the company of his beloved, and even then he was not quite sure

about his sanity, but only knew that he had got home after some stormy voyaging, and all was well.

The only trouble that he was aware of was that various uncles and friends of his English bride wrote to her, and said that the wedding must take place in the Old Country, and, as far as he could gather, it must take place from various large country houses and castles, all of which claimed Rose as their special property.

The trouble of which he was not aware took the form of a young man with narrow eyes and high cheek-bones, who had begun, as stealthily as any old trapper, to stalk his prey; and of this his prey was supremely unconscious. Nat Hastings was an open-minded youth, except in one respect, and it would not only have been impossible for him to hit a man from behind, but he never even dreamed that this might be done to himself. Yet all the time Matthew was stalking him warily and stealthily, and watching him.

What added to the complication of affairs was that Rose was watching *him*. She had never trusted Matthew, and never liked him. She was one of those women who have an infinite

capacity for taking care of people. She took care of her mother, and she took care of Nat, and she took care of a host of friends besides. And all of these believed that girls were something of a responsibility, and that this girl in particular would have been quite helpless without their protection.

Her instinct, which was one of the most trustworthy guides to knowledge that ever existed, told her that Mr. Sparkes was not such a good fellow as he professed to be, and she was confirmed in this opinion when she discovered that he did everything from a high sense of duty. If he went to a party it was always because his sister wanted him to take her; and if he dined out, he believed it would be rude to refuse. If he went for a row, it was not because he wanted to go, but because it was a manly exercise. If he got up at seven o'clock in the morning, it was because he ought to get up early; and if he lay in bed till nine, it was because it was his duty to rest. He had never done anything wrong except tell lies, and he had done this for so long that he believed himself to be rather a truthful person. A public school might have made a man of him, but he had been educated at home;

and he had inherited a large fortune, and went to lectures. In whatever clothes he wore he always looked as if he was afraid of getting them spoiled, and he affected a particular sort of soft grey felt hat, which he always replaced on his head with a certain carefulness after he had had occasion to lift it. Long ago he had made a trip to England, and had come back with a rooted objection to Englishmen; and it was perhaps because Rose was English that he was at first half afraid to marry her. Having overcome his objections it grieved him very much to find that she was engaged to Mr. Nathaniel Hastings; and before very long he conceived it to be his horrible duty to let people know what sort of a felon Nat was. He wanted to be quite sure of his man first, because he had only seen him when he was called Jack Johnson. But he had a good memory for faces, and he determined to go warily; and, with this intent, he asked, as we have seen, many interesting questions about Vancouver, B.C., and more particularly about the City of New Westminster.

One evening, at a dance, he began to give hints to Rose, or rather warnings, and the warnings took the form of a number of questions such as:—

“Have you known Hastings for long?”

“Where does he come from?”

“Where did he live before he came to London?”

“Who are his people?”

“What was his job before he came here?”

“Do any of your people at home know him?”—

And so on through a whole valse, when Rose might have been dancing and enjoying herself.

She smiled when he had finished, and said, “It is very good of you to take so much interest in us, Mr. Sparkes, but you have asked too many questions for me to answer all at once. Will you please have them typewritten, and send them round to-morrow?”

Even when she made her little joke there was a certain superb air about her which Matthew found it just a trifle difficult to cope with. All the same, it was exactly her little superb air which he liked so much, and he hated being snubbed by her without being the least bit less in love. She was extraordinarily pretty, and he noticed how well she amused men, and how she made them laugh. Once, as he passed a little recess where she was sitting, he heard her say:

"I thought at first you were going to be picturesque," and the man's voice laughingly replied, "And I thought you were going to be haughty."

"All you Canadians think that of English girls," she retorted, laughing, "while we weave delightful romances about you, and label you in our heart the strong silent men whom we have learned to love in books."

"In books!" exclaimed the young man. "What good do books do us!"

There was a strong touch of disappointment in his voice, and Matthew said to himself, "Another victim, I suppose," and passed on.

He even began to contrast her favourably with some of the girls whom he knew and had been brought up with, and he found that she bowed more prettily than they did, and was more charming to elderly people, and more courteous to her mother.

This was rather horrible of him, of course, and to his credit let it be said that since he has married a Canadian he has entirely changed his mind about everything. At that time the English girl had it all her own way with him, and he hated to think she was throwing herself away. He argued that a girl from England knows nothing about

young men out here, and it became more than ever his duty to speak, and to speak soon.

At the dance that evening supper was spread on small round tables in a marquee built in the garden, and when Mr. Sparkes entered with his partner she exclaimed, "Here are two vacant places!" and sat herself at a table where Hastings and his fiancée were eating cold turkey and ham. He did not choose the place deliberately, but when he found himself at the round table he decided that the Fates, who are always on the side of laudable intention, had guided him to the spot.

Conversation between different couples at dance suppers is not necessary, and the pair opposite him seemed perfectly contented and happy without the benefit of his remarks, but he hazarded—across a goodly spread of mayonnaise and galantine—the suggestion that the ballroom had been hot, and that the supper tent was cold, and then he asked Nat quite suddenly how he liked London, Ont.

The young man in reply expressed satisfaction in the place, where indeed he had been well received, and where he had many friends.

"You used to be in Vancouver, usen't you, before you came here?" Matthew went on.

"Yes," said Nat, "I was."

It was no more than a bare answer to a perfectly civil question, and he wondered why Rose broke in rather sharply, saying :

"Don't compare the two places, Nat. Canadians have hardly got accustomed to being one country yet, and British Columbians provoked may retort that there is snow sometimes in Eastern Canada."

"Why should they say that?" said Matthew literally.

"It is a libel of course," she responded lightly, "but it is wonderful what a man will say when he is roused."

It began to dawn on Matthew slowly that the young lady was laughing. Whereupon, being cross, he pressed his conversation still further, and said, "How long were you in Vancouver?"

"I forget," said Nat.

"I have been there," said Matthew's partner, who, although a quiet girl, thought that she might now have some share in the conversation. "I went to stay with my brother, who is in a bank, because I was perfectly certain he would get into mischief without me."

"Men do get into mischief sometimes in Western Canada," said Matthew sententiously.

"Even in Western Canada!" said Rose, with an adorable little shrug of the shoulders, and an appeal to some invisible audience, which, from the direction of her gaze, seemed to live in the ceiling.

"Did you like the place?" said the young girl who had spoken before, and Nat replied briefly, "No, I hated it."

She began to talk about the scenery, and the conversation seemed to drift away from personal matters until Matthew said suddenly, and almost sharply: "What were you doing out there?"

Rose was drawing on her glove, having finished her cold turkey and a meringue, and she turned to Matthew now with a smile of disarming sweetness, and said to him: "It has been whispered to me that Mr. Hastings was following a remarkable career."

Nat looked surprised and glanced up suddenly, and Matthew said, half below his breath, "I wish I knew what it was."

"Perhaps you would hardly understand if I told you," the sweet voice went on, "because the work was of such an unusual character."

"I think," said the young girl on Matthew's right, "that as you have aroused our curiosity you ought to tell us what it was."

"He was minding his own business," said Rose, and, with a gay little nod, she got up and left the table, and Nat followed her.

Perhaps the conversation and the snub that ended it were what made Matthew's half-formed plans develop into a decision. He thought of the matter all night, and saw quite plainly what it was his duty to do, and in the morning he put on his best grey felt hat, and drove in his automobile to the office of Landells & Co., where he asked to see the senior partner and presented his card.

Mr. Landells was a kind-looking man with a firm mouth. He bade the young man to be seated, and then began to speak upon the telephone, and throughout the whole of the interview with Matthew he was rung up at intervals, and divided his attention between his visitor and the black mouthpiece of the instrument by his side—so that the conversation was something like this :

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Smart—Sparkes—I beg your pardon. Your mother is well, I hope?"—"Yes, I am here, who wants me? Well, say I can't possibly see him till twelve o'clock."—"I believe your business is important, Mr. Sparkes, or I am sure you would

not have called upon me at this busy time of the morning."

Matthew said that his business was important.

Mr. Landells said (into the black mouthpiece) : "Yes, tell him the Agreement must be stamped, and he can send it round here by hand."—"Now, Mr. Sparkes, I am quite at your service, and am very sorry for the interruptions."

"I think you know Miss Rose Cumberland, an English girl who is staying in London?" Matthew said, crossing his legs and speaking with deliberation.

Mr. Landells nodded, and said, "I know her very well."

"She is a charming girl," said Matthew.

"She is a charming girl," repeated Mr. Landells, "but if you have nothing more important to say, Mr. Sparkes," he added courteously, "I must remind you that my time is not altogether at your service."

Mentally, Matthew called Mr. Landells' manner "short." He put out his hand as though to arrest his own flight from the office, and said he would endeavour to be brief.

"Thank you," said Mr. Landells. He toyed with the telephone receiver once more, and said in

a manner which Matthew could not call dignified, "Tell him to go to blazes!" The friend thus addressed made no audible reply, and the telephone ceased ringing for a few minutes.

"She is engaged," said Matthew, "to a young man in your office."

"Yes, to Hastings," said Mr. Landells. He had a long upper lip and shrewd eyes, and when he looked at Matthew the young man felt glad that he had on his best clothes.

"Do you know anything about the young man?" asked his visitor. "Believe me, sir," he added, "I don't mean to be impertinent."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mr. Landells drily.

"I just want to ask if you know anything about him."

"And your reason for asking this rather unusual question?"

"Is that *I* know a good deal!" said Matthew, and felt the dramatic touch in the situation.

"That is interesting," said Mr. Landells.

"The fact is," said Matthew, "I happen to know what took place when he was at Vancouver."

"What took place to him, or what took place in a general way?" questioned the older man.

"Mr. Hastings was in Vancouver (correct me if I am wrong) in 1908. That would be about the time of the conclusion of—"

"Excuse me," said Matthew, "but I was not referring to European politics, but to Hastings' own personal history."

"Thank you," said Mr. Landells, accepting the correction. "Your remarks were a little ambiguous."

A clerk came to the door, and asked if Mr. Landells would speak to a client.

"In a few moments," said the old man.

"You will have to give me a little more than a few moments, my friend!" said Matthew to himself with satisfaction.

"And now, sir," said the lawyer, placing the tips of his fingers together and bending forward in a courteous manner, "if you will kindly let me know your business, which I understand is Mr. Hastings' also—"

"I have nothing whatever to do with him," said the young man. He was afraid of being bowed out, and he said hastily, "But I do know that Miss Cumberland is a young girl, and that she is fresh out from England, where none of these things are known."

"These things?" queried Mr. Landells.

"Yes, sir, these things," said Mr. Sparkes impatiently. "Miss Cumberland is, I understand, very well connected in England, and this should make her doubly careful."

"?"

"And I consider it a duty I owe both to her and to her relations—"

"Who have written to you perhaps?"

"No."

"Then let us confine ourselves to the young lady first, and we can go on to the relations afterwards," Mr. Landells said.

"You are responsible for Nat Hastings' position in London," Matthew said.

"I was not aware of it," said the lawyer.

"But he occupies a very high position in your office, and he has been very well received here owing to you."

Mr. Landells bowed again. He was a man who could do so in a manner which almost took the form of speech. His upper lip seemed to lengthen as he bowed, and his grey eyes assumed a look more shrewd than common, and were filled with humour. At this instant his bow said as plainly as possible, "Sir, you flatter me

too much," and Matthew Sparkes winced a little when he made it.

"I don't think it is fair," he blurted out, much more bluntly than he had meant to do, "for a young man to go about everywhere and be received by the best people, and to let them know nothing about himself."

"His history, then, is an interesting one?" queried Mr. Landells.

"I don't know about its being interesting," said his young visitor, "but I do know this: Nat Hastings served a sentence of six weeks in New Westminster Gaol—I saw him myself at the trial."

"That is indeed a most interesting history," said Mr. Landells.

"What I think is this," Matthew went on, feeling encouraged: "we have taken him at his own valuation—"

"I understood you to say it was at my valuation," interrupted the lawyer.

"Well, we have admitted him amongst us," the young man went on, "without really knowing anything about him, and now he has got engaged to a girl newly out from England, who has no means of finding out the truth."

"Except what he likes to tell her," said Mr. Landells, his upper lip drawn farther down, and his prominent teeth showing from beneath it.

"I venture to suggest," said Matthew, "that if she knew he was a gaol-bird she would not marry him."

"And perhaps I should not have received him into this office," said Mr. Landells.

"I could hardly imagine your doing so," was the reply.

Mr. Landells took up the telephone receiver and held it to his ear, raised the mouthpiece to his lips, and said in a delightfully conversational voice, "I am afraid I must put off our meeting, dear sir, until a young man who is with me has finished showing me my duty, and has completed settling the love affairs of a charming young lady, and until, too, he has finished blackguarding a young fellow with whom he is on friendly terms. No, it's all right. I can't tell you when the interview will be over, but he seems in no hurry to go."

When he laid down the telephone Matthew had disappeared through the door, and could be heard descending the office staircase in a hurry. Mr. Landells smiled down the telephone, and

taking up his morning paper he continued reading it, while Matthew put his nice grey felt hat on his head and got into his automobile, and told the chauffeur to drive anywhere he pleased, but to drive quickly.

For a long time the next step in his round of duty did not seem to be apparent to him, and he had to enjoy, as well as he could, seeing a very happy couple increase in joyousness and in devotion to each other as the days rolled by. He was afraid to indulge in any more little gibes and taunts, veiled though they might be, against the happy couple, because he was inordinately afraid of the wit which one of them possessed, and of the unbridled use which she made of her tongue.

He said nothing, until one day he found everyone talking about Nat Hastings in a manner that he could not approve. Nat, it appears, had gone into the country to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Landells. They had one well-beloved boy—Fred, to wit—a little pickle of twelve years old, who, with a boon companion of the same age, went out sky-larking one night, pretending to be brigands or highwaymen or Heaven knows what. But the upshot of it was that Master Landells, leading the way through the pitch-dark night, fell into a

quarry half-filled with water, and was rescued by Nat, who, hearing cries, went to the boy's assistance, and, with nothing to guide him but Master Landells' yells, dived fifty feet into the water at the bottom of the quarry, and brought the nearly exhausted child safe to land, and subsequently to his home. It was shortly after this (and perhaps the chronology was a mere coincidence) that Matthew finally decided that it was his duty to tell Miss Rose Cumberland just the sort of man she was going to marry.

In answer to his inquiries at their house during the following week he heard that Miss Cumberland and her mother had sailed for England. Matthew therefore went to Mr. Hastings himself, and so unpleasant was his interview with that gentleman that it hardly seems expedient to describe it. It began tamely, and in a gentleman-like manner, and in the extreme dejection of a certain poor fellow called Nathaniel Hastings, who had not a word to say in his own excuse; but it ended in a royal and splendid way when Nat kicked Mr. Sparkes downstairs, and, seizing pen and paper, wrote a full account of himself and his past and all that concerned him that very moment to Miss Rose Cumberland, and told her what a

fool he had been, and how unworthy of her; and he ended up by saying that he would love her till the hour of his death, but from this day forward she was perfectly free, and he would await her letter telling him that the engagement was broken off, or, if she preferred it, he would understand without being told that not writing meant that all was over between them. He posted the letter, and for a fortnight he wondered how miserable it was possible for a man to be. At the end of the fortnight he was without a letter, and he began to add up a wearisome sum over and over again in his head. "My letter left by the mail on Friday, and could get to England the following Thursday. Suppose she had written at once, I would have received her reply on the Friday following—or at the latest Saturday—or at the very latest the following Monday. Suppose she were away from home it might even be Wednesday before I heard." But Wednesday came, and Thursday and Friday, and still there was no letter, and after one more agonising week, when Mr. Landells looked at him with his upper lip drawn down and said nothing, he sent him to England on very important business, and told him he would feel greatly obliged if he could start at once.

Nat would have liked to wait for one more mail, just to see if there was a letter, but his departure was accelerated by the senior partner and by Mrs. Landells, who packed his trunk for him, and seemed in as great a hurry as her husband to get rid of him. Master Landells, now recovered from his ducking, which had been followed by a serious illness, was the only person who seemed to mourn his departure, and confided to the despairing young man that it was all rot his going at all.

"I am going home on business," said Hastings. Upon this the vulgar little boy pulled down one corner of his eye, and inquired, "Do you see any green there?"

But Nat was too much out of sorts to trouble his head to inquire into cryptic utterances of this description. In moody fashion he took train to Montreal, and thence shipped to England.

As a fellow-passenger he was not a success. Most of the people who had anything to do with him were bored nearly to tears by the absent-minded young man, who never joined in games nor in walks, nor seemed to care what he was reading, nor joined in dances on deck. He forgot to say "Good-bye" to anyone at parting, and no

one noticed the omission, and he set his foot for the first time in the Old Country feeling as hopeless and out of luck as it is possible for a young man to do.

He arrived late one afternoon, and saw a fog for the first time, and was completely baffled by it, and wondered what London was like behind the enshrouding veil which enveloped it. He tried to find Rose at the address she had given him, and learned that no cabs were running, and that it would be quite impossible to reach the place he mentioned. In his despair he asked the sympathetic waiter in the Savoy Hotel if there was anything to do, and heard that there was a theatre actually next door, which would not involve creeping through the fog in a cab, and that tickets could be had at the hotel office.

He went to the play, and never heard a word of the whole performance, for sitting in front of him in the stalls were Rose Cumberland and a young man. He did not like to say, even to himself, that she was flirting with him, but she was certainly keeping him very well entertained in the old Rose Cumberland manner, and it hurt him horribly that she had consoled herself so soon and so easily. He knew now why it was that fellows

drowned themselves, and he slipped out of the theatre as soon as the performance was over, and went back to his hotel, and believed he lay awake all night, and no doubt was very restless for several hours.

In the days that followed he wandered about London, and tried to take an interest in all that he saw, and wondered at the great streets, and went to see the Horse Guards, and St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, and he drove about on the tops of omnibuses in order to observe the splendid pageant of London. And all the time he wanted nothing in the world but to have Rose beside him, and he knew once and for all that without her there was a settled dulness over every single thing in this wide world.

He met her quite suddenly one day as she came out of church on Sunday, and she gave a little scream of surprise, and then began to laugh, and said: "But why give a poor girl heart complaint?"

"I didn't mean to give you heart complaint," he said miserably.

She began heading him to the Park, without his knowing it, and they went through a side gate and crossed the Row, and he said suddenly,

"How beautiful this is!" just because Rose was with him.

She looked eastward, and said, "That's Apsley House," without seeming to take a great interest in the information she gave, and all the time she was leading him away from the crowds, which were streaming past the Achilles statue, and they went to a big open space where some early crocuses were coming up through the grass, and where fat pigeons strutted about, and sparrows were taking bread out of an old man's hand.

When she had got him safely detached from the rest of the world she said, "Well, Nat?" and waited for him to speak.

The invitation was followed by a prolonged silence.

"Did you get my letter?" he said at last with a burst.

"No," she said, and added, "I suppose you got mine?"

Before giving the information which follows, the reader is asked to remember that these were two very foolish young people, both deeply in love, and therefore both completely absent-minded. They told each other every detail of the posting of the letters, and into which letter-

boxes they had put them. Miss Cumberland was almost loquacious on the subject. She said : "I went out myself because I would allow no one else to post it, and I took it to the red pillar box at the corner of the square, because I always see a very nice young postman clearing that box regularly, so I knew it would go safely; then I came home, and I watched for nearly an hour at the drawing-room window until he came and unlocked the little door in front of the box, and took away the bag—so I *know* it went."

Nat said, "I took mine to the General Post Office, and asked what time the Home mails were going, and heard that I should just catch the one outward bound for England." Nat became almost drivelling in his account of the incident. He said, "I heard the thing rattle down into the bottom of the box, and I knew it was gone for ever."

He stopped himself from saying anything else, and Rose took up the wondrous tale, and said, "Two letters cannot have gone wrong." She also remarked that the Post Office was getting very careless, and she had it in her mind to speak seriously to the young postman who cleared the pillar box at the corner of the square.

"It is too bad," she said.

"It is unpardonable," ended Nat. He said he felt like having somebody's blood. "What address did you put on the letter?" he went on.

She thought that rather a silly question, and replied, "I think I know your address, Nat, dear."

"You know there are two Londons!" he said.

She, as it began to dawn upon her that she had done something excessively foolish, said without a moment's hesitation that there was only one London in the world, and it was situated in Eastern Canada, where the dearest, the best, etc., etc., etc., lived.

And of course when she put it so charmingly as that, Nat had to forgive her everything. He himself was not prone to absent-mindedness, but he began to have awful qualms, and to wonder whether he had put anything but London on his envelope. He could not be sure what he had done; his mind had been in a ferment at the time. No, for the life of him he could not remember putting London, England, upon the envelope, and he could think of no better excuse for himself than to say, in the manner of Rose,

"but of course there is only one London in the world, and it is London, England, where the most wonderful, the most lovely, the most desirable—"

"Perhaps both letters are at the Dead Letter Office," said Rose brilliantly (they each admitted that they had written on foolscap paper, unaddressed, because they had so much to say), and, when they found that the minds of each of them had played the same trick, they were so delighted and so unashamed of their stupidity that they began to talk nonsense about it, and Rose said that mistakes were the only things that ever turned out well, and that anything which brought her lover to England must be the very highest form of wisdom. Thereupon Nat suddenly remembered all that the important letter contained, and ceased to talk nonsense, and then and there, off by heart, he repeated every syllable of the letter which he had written. When he had finished he refused to meet her eyes, but kept his own fixed on the green trees in the Park and the gleaming Serpentine beyond, with the little children playing at its edge, and said, miserably and penitently, "It's not a nice story."

"It's not nice," said the lady calmly, "and it's not even new."

He looked at her quickly.

“I heard it years ago,” she said.

They reached home that afternoon about five o’clock, and believed (or said they believed) that they were in time for lunch.

The moral of this tale has been lost sight of, I am afraid, but they lived happily ever afterwards ; and Mr. and Mrs. Landells smiled and sent a handsome cheque when they heard that the wedding was to take place three weeks after Mr. Hastings’ arrival in England, and Fred—that vulgar little boy—said oracularly, “Business indeed ! You don’t find any flies on me.”

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Macnaughtan, Sarah Broom
A green Englishman

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